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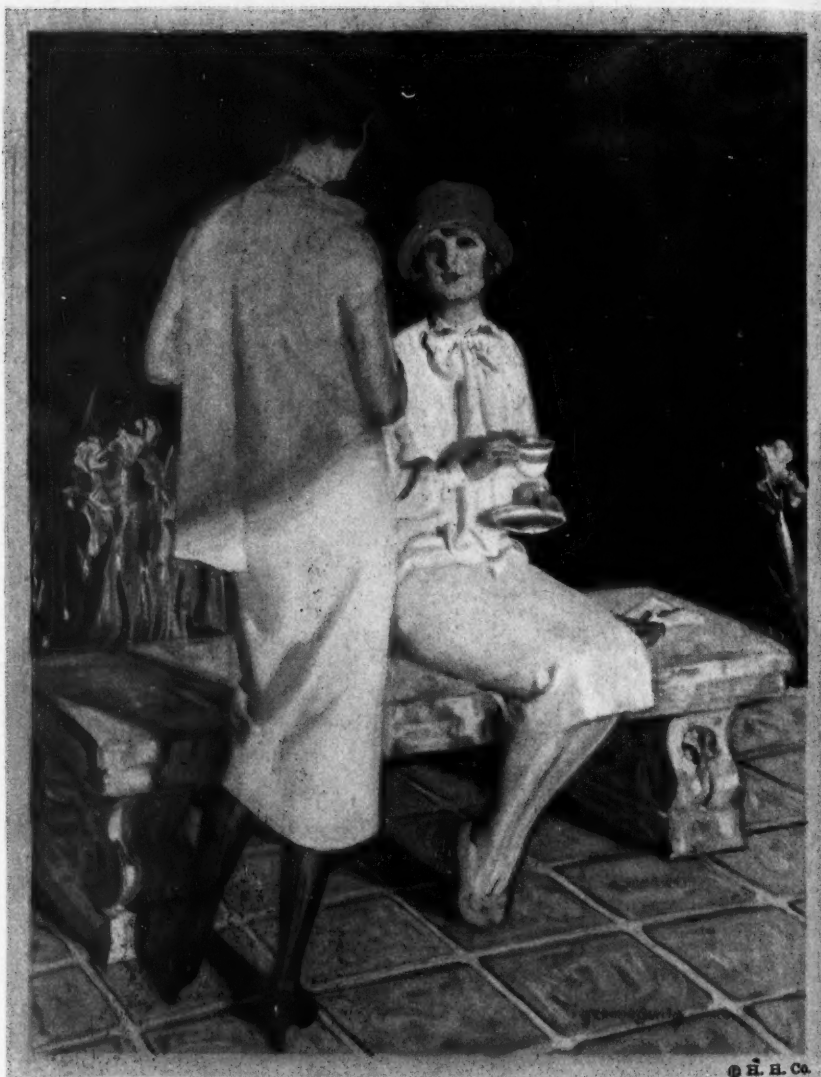
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Words and Pictures by

Around the Well

AT A dinner party a year ago the conversation turned to travel.

"There's one more trip I want to make," said B., a famous globe trotter. "I want to go down through the South Seas to New Zealand, Australia, New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, then to Peking and across the Gobi Desert to Uрга and so on home by the Trans-Siberian and Moscow."

"That's a trip I'd like to make," I remarked fervently.

"Come along," he suggested.

Thus the present trip originated and it is with the lands we are to visit that this and succeeding stories will deal.

A year later almost to a day our party, consisting of two couples, was saying good-by to friends and relatives. The trunks and bags were packed with clothing suitable for intense cold, intense heat, rainy seasons and wind-swept plateaus.

We are prepared for certain hardships, but none so great as when we waved good-by to two small boys aged seven and three. They were left parked under the watchful eyes of their grandparents.

B., my companion and the instigator of the present trip, is a man of large affairs and an inventive turn of mind. When the sea is smooth he invents many things.

On the second night out he launched this startling proposition:

"What the Orient needs is a synthetic bird's-nest soup," he said. "This soup is the favorite Chinese delicacy, but at present there isn't enough to go round. If a company could be organized to supply the four hundred million Chinese with synthetic bird's-nest soup, and if each Chinaman spent only a dollar a year, you would have an annual income of four hundred million dollars."

AGOOD part of subsequent meal-time discussions was devoted to elaborating this glittering project, thereby killing much time which might have been wasted on more instructive but less diverting topics.

It had been nearly fifteen years since I had been in Honolulu. In 1910, returning from China on the old Asia, since wrecked and looted by pirates, we paused there a few hours. At that time we had hurried out to see the Aquarium, the Waikiki Beach and the Pali, all time-honored attractions, but my most vivid recollection was of the excellent luncheon we had at the Alexander Young Hotel, where there was everything to gratify appetites insufficiently exercised by the monotonous fare on the Asia.

Honolulu, as I then saw it, was somewhat disappointing. We

were strangers and liked the place to about the same degree that Rudyard Kipling, a stranger spending a few rainy hours in a Chicago hack, liked that city.

Honolulu this time was a revelation. A magic wand had touched the place and transformed it, even as Miami and Los Angeles have been transformed.

It is now a flourishing city in a setting of

surpassing loveliness. There is life and progress and enterprise on all sides. The down-town district has become metropolitan and up-to-date. The mountain-sides are terraced with beautiful houses to which perfect roads, flower-lined, wind upward under canopies of great spreading trees.

Every American should learn something of the beauty as well as the agricultural and military importance of these guardian outposts of our western coast. His pride in American influence and enterprise will equal that which he feels when he visits the Canal

Zone or the Philippines, where American administration has done so much to make him proud of his country.

He will be glad clear through that the islands are an integral part of the United States and that there were American statesmen of sufficient vision to encourage their annexation.



OTHER nations have tried very hard to find excuses for grabbing the islands—Britain, Russia and France—but without success.

One will be surprised to find the Hawaiian Group indicated on a Spanish chart printed in 1555.

Captain Cook rediscovered them in 1778.

The Captain and his crew were greeted with great cordiality and friendliness by the natives and were treated as gods. The sailors repaid this hospitality by tearing down the sacred fences for firewood, whereat the natives demurred with such effect that the doughty Captain was stabbed to death on the island of Hawaii in 1779. The Captain was certainly taught a lesson.

In front of the Judiciary Building in Honolulu is a statue of King Kamehameha I, who ruled for twenty-four years. He is the George Washington of the islands.

Coming from the island of Hawaii, he defeated the Oahu ruler and now he has an assured place in history as Conqueror.

It is related that he herded his enemy up on the wind-swept height of the Pali and drove them over the precipitous cliff, causing unanimous mortality to the enemy.

An old Portuguese has been sitting at the

foot of Kamehameha's statue waiting for him to step down. He is the world's champion watchful waiter, for he has kept his vigil for twenty-five years.

The real development of the islands dates from 1820, when the missionary ship Thaddeus arrived from New England with the Reverend Asa Thurston, the Reverend Hiram Bingham, three laymen and the wives of the five gentlemen.

THESE pioneers and those who followed them civilized the natives, established schools and laid the foundation for the wonderful Hawaii of today.

When this is printed over 200 ships of the United States Navy will be conducting their maneuvers in these waters. A vast war problem will be played with the navy trying to effect



John T. McCutcheon

Known World



a landing and capture Honolulu. Opposed will be the land forces with airplanes, shore batteries and submarines.

Umpires will decide when a battery or a ship technically has been put out of action, and when a landing has been effected. Great preparations are being made to provide entertainment for the forty-five thousand sailors and perhaps an equal number of visitors who will be drawn there for the period of the maneuvers.

Hawaii is a great naval and military base, perhaps our most important one, and the presence of these forces adds greatly to the interest of life in the islands. Society in Honolulu is as cosmopolitan and up-to-date as may be found in any community along the Atlantic seaboard.

ONE cannot be long in Honolulu without observing the racial problems which confront its administrators. Over 42 percent of the population is Japanese, while only 8 percent is American, British and German. The remainder is divided between Filipinos, Chinese, Hawaiian, semi-Hawaiian and Portuguese.

I have seen a photograph of thirty-two school-girls, each of a different race or racial combination.

By virtue of the Fourteenth Amendment to our Constitution, every child born within the jurisdiction of the United States is a citizen of the United States. By 1940 about 47 percent of the electorate will be composed of voters of the Japanese race.



The Japanese school-children are eager to learn, and American mothers reluctantly recognize the fact that Japanese children usually stand first in the classes.

The Japanese are especially good at multiplication.

The second day I was in Honolulu I attended the luncheon at which one of the guests of honor was the retiring Japanese Consul General, Mr. Yamazaki, an able and cultured diplomat who has done excellent work in composing the difficulties between the Japanese and Americans.

He believes there is no future for anyone who is "half this and half that" in allegiance and citizenship. He has realized fully that the future of American-born children of Japanese ancestry must inevitably be with America, and that it is the duty of parents to promote, not to hinder, the process of Americanization that goes on during their childhood.

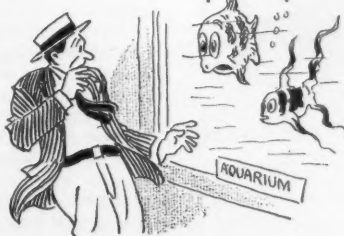
The results of Mr. Yamazaki's work have been beneficial to both the Japanese and the Americans, and while at first arousing bitter resentment from the Japanese, he is now leaving with the best wishes of both races.

HAWAII is strong on flora but rather weak on fauna. There are no snakes in the islands. Mosquitoes were introduced in 1826. On one island there are deer and in various other parts there are wild goats, hogs and an occasional wild bull.

The mongoose was introduced from India to destroy the rats that preyed on the sugar cane, and has become a pest itself.

The flora is unrivaled.

An eminent geographer has called the Hawaiian Islands "the floral wonderland of the world." In some of the forests a human feels like a Lilliputian, surrounded by leaves larger than himself and ferns as big as elm trees back home.



There are 1300 varieties of hibiscus, any one of which is worth a poem. There are so many night-blooming cereus as to crowd the hours between dusk and dawn.

Sugar is the king. The cane plantations are vast domains. They produce enough sugar to sweeten the Pacific Ocean, and from my own experience, this abundance of sugar has flavored the hospitality that the stranger meets in those favored islands. No hospitality could be sweeter.

The pineapple plantations, covering valleys and hills, look as though they were laid out by an exterior decorator or a cubist designer.



It is possible to get almost any kind of climate you want some place in the Hawaiian group. On the island of Hawaii the two great volcanoes, Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea, have snow on their crests.

In Oahu, where the climate is so uniformly pleasant, the local residents get variety by having residences near the sea, as well as up in the cool heights of

the peaks behind the city. One family has a Japanese house on the sea-shore, a villa on the beautiful slope of the Pacific's most famous rock, Diamond Head, still another two thousand feet up on the peak, and a fourth at a flowery ranch on the windward side of the island. We spent eight days in the islands, six of which were so crowded with social gaiety as to leave barely a moment for rest.

A dinner of native dishes served in a beautiful modern Italian villa with tennis court, swimming pool, formal gardens and pergolas carved out of the fluted sides of Diamond Head; a Chinese dinner served in a Japanese garden and house at the sea-shore; a *Luau*, or Hawaiian feast, where the dishes and strange foods were as good as they were strange.

Imagine the sensation of a *Malihini* (tenderfoot) when told that the delicious dish he has just enjoyed is octopus!

A HOUSE party at a ranch at the other end of Oahu, with baseball and sea bathing; a hula dance by natives just to show that this wildly advertised accomplishment, although almost extinct, can still be revived to edify visitors who demand it; a musicale; surf-riding at famous Waikiki in which the native Hawaiians displayed a marked superiority to the visitors; a visit to the great naval base at Pearl Harbor and another to Schofield Barracks, where the greater part of the troops are stationed; and beautiful drives on perfect roads through vast domains of sugar cane and pineapple fields, up to the crests of peaks amid scenes of startling loveliness, and a few moments in the famous Aquarium, where drinking men are induced to reform. It was a series of crowded hours.

In the daytime, fleets of airplanes maneuvered in the blue skies, submarines maneuvered at sea, Pacific liners passed to and from the Orient.

Everywhere there was sunshine, prosperity and contentment, colleges and schools of the most advanced kind, a museum where a feather robe worth a million dollars is to be seen. The whole six days crowded with astonished pleasure.

One will not be disposed to contest the Hawaiians' claim that it is "the Paradise of the Pacific."

Two of our eight days were spent in a trip to the great volcano, Kilauea, but that is another story.

The Goldfish in Fish

Illustrations by



C. Morris



C. Morris's Wife



C. Birdie's Husband

THESE always had been, even when as a youngster he had used to shout it through years of a childhood spent in the din of Delancey Street, something about Morris's voice.

Something that approached a slow rich gargle. Centuries of Oriental unctuousness lay like salve on that voice. The unctuousness of the bazaar merchant. The unctuousness that accompanies the gesture of the rubbing of the hands. Rhythmic unctuousness of a dealer in things. Lover of things. Connoisseur of things. Silks. Scents. Cloth of gold. Sandalwood. Ivories. Apes. Peacocks.

All in the voice of Morris. There was a nap on it. The fuzz of centuries of suavities of salesmanship.

When Morris spoke, his long black eyes lay in two somnolent slits over the somnolent voice.

Mrs. Goldfish considered him her fairest child.

"It's a pity," she used to comment to almost every conclave of the shawled women that took place on the long, lean tenement stoop on Delancey Street, "it's a pity my Morris should have the beautiful curls for the family and my Reenie have only a little waviness, and my Birdie's, they're straight like a poker."

In a way it was a pity. Because one day Morris's curls were to lie in a little ruin on a bath towel over which his mother's tears were to flow. They were almost the only bitter tears she was ever to shed over him.

The slightly somnolent voice of Morris. It clung to your consciousness long after it had drifted into silence.

Sooner or later, Morris got his way.

A gentle, insidious way. A way that had transformed his father from a petty, puttering dealer in used furniture in Delancey Street—a lean, argumentative little old man with a protruding chin and a curl of goatee that was pretty constantly wagging from haggling—into the dim old man whose beard was mostly quiet now and faint with Havana where it had once reeked with meerschaum.

The old man's haggling days were over. He sat now most of the time in the bow of the brace of sunny living-room windows that overlooked waves of upper West Side roofs and a distant slash of Hudson River.

Once the old man summed it up rather grimly for himself, sitting there the long leisurely hours through, his head dozy on his chest. Not only were his haggling days over, the old man concluded. But his days were over.

The old man's days were over.

That was an ungrateful thought, to be smashed back like a jack-in-the-box.

By the time Morris Goldfish was nineteen, he was earning more per week than his father had ever in his life earned per month.

And as auctioneer!

Well, with that voice, his mother had once dared to dream of a rabbi. But from the first, when at fourteen he had voluntarily hired himself out to a Japanese who kept a trinket-goods shop in Mott Street (auction Saturdays) Morris found his way to that ancient trade.

It was his voice. With its strange insidiousness, furry, never raucous, plaintive, never aggressive; dulcet and pained at the undiscerning bidder, never bully-ragging; Morris was to establish a new precedent in an old, old craft. It just pierced,

A NEW STORY by FANNIE HURST

R. F. Schabelitz

that voice, down into you like a hypodermic needle. Subtly. That was the voice that ended the haggling days of old man Goldfish and landed him in the sunny bow of window that overlooked the slash of the distant river. That was the voice that lowered the stridency of Mother Goldfish, that married Reenie Goldfish to Irving Silk, of Silk and Striker, that married itself to Irma, only daughter of Wolfheim Striker—Striker and Striker, Incorporated.

That was the voice. The insidious voice that had long since promoted the raucous job of auctioneering into a gentle art.

Some of the genuinely fine collections of his time, from the Dadarian Rock Crystal Collection and the Rienzi Palace tapestries to the Rinehardt group of ivory elephants and the Danzelli cryptics, had gone down before the lapis lazuli signet that Morris used as hammer. One of the Danzelli cryptics, signed with a seventeenth century Florentine signature, hung over the imported Gothic fireplace in Morris Goldfish's living-room in his house in West Seventy-third Street.

A stone-lace Renaissance house, fifty feet removed from Riverside Drive and facing the rococo splendor of the home of a steel magnate about which sight-seeing bus guards megaphoned.

The voice of Morris Goldfish. He was using it now in the bow-windowed living-room of the ten room and three baths apartment he furnished and maintained for his parents in West 110th Street.

Using it against an atmosphere of feeble rebellion. But it had stilled many more active rebellions, that voice. The rebellion against giving up the used-furniture store in Delancey Street. The rebellion against hits, where generations of shawls had swathed softly. The rebellion against loneliness of unneighborly neighbors and the upper West Side cost of rump for pot-roast. The rebellion against twin beds and loaf sugar and boiled collars. The rebellion against the installation of a second maid who changed the lower as well as the upper sheets every week.

There was one member of the Goldfish family into whose blood stream that voice had never slid, insidiously, like the hypodermic needle.

That was Birdie. But more, much more of Birdie later.

THERE was about this rebellion, hanging like haze over the living-room—Heppelwhite, that Morris had knocked down to himself from the G. P. Granadine sale—something special. Something ominous. Something that made Morris's upper lip, topped with a little black mustache that looked as if it had been kissed there, not quite so sure of itself.

"We been, Morris, up against lots of outrageousness since you got yourself so prosperous, but never nothing like this."

"Mother," said Morris and directed his somnolent eyes a little sadly toward the droop of her there in the Heppelwhite chair, "you're making a mountain out of a mole-hill."

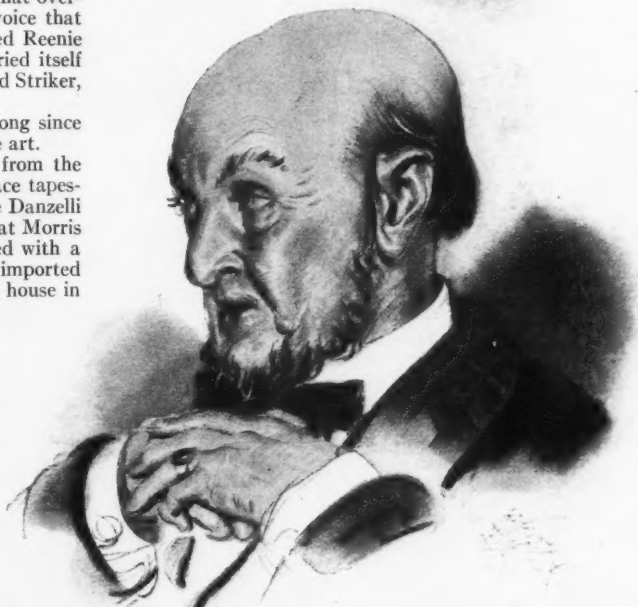
"A mole-hill," said Mrs. Goldfish and wound her hands in a dry-wash. "A mole-hill! I should cut off my name in two like it was so much silk by the yard, and a mole-hill he calls it."

"Mother, you don't understand—"

"I don't understand! I understand that my son comes home and announces to me and his papa, like it was so much weather,



C. Birdie



C. Papa Goldfish



C. Mama Goldfish

that we ain't named Goldfish any more. We're named Fish!"

"No, no. Not like it was so much weather, mother. I've explained it to you so carefully at least six times since I entered this room ten minutes ago, that I have changed our name legally because it was a liability and not an asset. No man named Morris Goldfish can hope to achieve the position in life that I have mapped out for myself. For us."

"Forty years now, son, I been a Goldfish and—"

"Morris Goldfish and Maurice Fish are two different human beings, mother. Certain walks of life are closed to Morris Goldfish that I, as Maurice Fish, propose to enter."

"You hear that, papa. The name that was good enough for you to get born into, and for me to marry into, is somethink to be ashamed of. Irma, ain't you got no pride in family? Ain't the name that was good enough for you to marry when you married my son, good enough now so you don't got to make laughing-stock of you and your children by changing it?"

Mrs. Maurice Fish, née Irma Striker, had gray eyes and a nose that had been straightened. Bloodlessly, "It would have to be bloodlessly," had been Birdie's trite comment. "The stuff don't flow in her," Irma's finger nails were flaming ruby cabochons which hung from her hands in glowing convex surfaces. Irma's hair, bobbed, was marcelled so that only the boyish shave peak in the back revealed it.

Irma called her nurse-maid a *bonne*.

Irma weighed one hundred and fourteen pounds and attended Lyman Wastrel's Stretching Classes for weight reduction.

When Irma sat in a chair, she unloosed like a character doll. There simply were no bones to her. She sprawled like so much sawdust crammed into painted cloth.

"She don't sit," said old man Goldfish. "She splatters."

"Mother, you don't understand," said Irma and took a long puff at her cigaret and left a red rim on it.

You-don't-understand—you-don't-understand.

Said Birdie once: "Put those three words together every time she has said them to you, ma, and they will reach from here to Pocatello, Idaho, wherever and whatever that is."

"I don't understand?" repeated Mrs. Goldfish in three large shrugs. "Oh, I understand, all right! I understand I'm ashamed I should face anybody for being laughing-stock. My friends down-town should know it on me. I should call up over the telephone to Kramer my butcher—he should send me and charge me a miltz to Mrs. Julius Fish. I ask you, papa, sitting there like you was froze there, is that the way you want I should got to call up for my miltz?"

There was about Julius Goldfish, sitting there in Heppelwhite, with the Havana fragrant droop to the quiescent goatee of him, something of the curious kind of suspended animation of a figure sitting under water. Drowned there, but in the casual attitude of life.



C. "About the lonest road any man can

When Julius Goldfish spoke, his goatee had the merest flip to it, none of the exuberant waggle of the old days of haggle.

"Fish," he repeated in the remote and watery tones. "Fish? For why, Morris, is it better we should be just Fish and not Goldfish? Ain't it commoner, son, to be just any old fish like a carp or a pike or a minnie? For why is it finer? Just Fish? With Goldfish you know right away it's a fancy fish sometimes with two tails what swims around all day in a glass bowl in the window. I know goldfish what sell so high as twenty dollars."

"Fish! My Reenie don't need to care—she's married herself out of her name. But Birdie—I want once to know what your sister Birdie has to say when she hears how she's had her tail cut off from her name—or is it her head? I—"

"It ain't good, son, you should move us out of our name all of a sudden like—like you moved us up out of our business and out of our old home. I know everything you do is for the better.

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travel," said Birdie, "is the road back from down and out. And me and Izzy have traveled it."

But our name, son—when you cut it, is like cutting something so close like—like an arm or a something that's part of us."

There was the enormous nervelessness to old man Goldfish's voice of one caught in the lassitude of realizing his defeat in advance.

"You don't understand, dad," said Irma, and flipped cigaret ashes backward over the chair, because her knee as she slanted in Heppelwhite was higher than her head. "Goldfish, as it has been translated from whatever your forebears chose to call themselves, is a comedy name. Nobody bearing it can help being just a little ridiculous all of the time. It isn't the name that an important art connoisseur, or I should think the parents or sisters of an important art connoisseur, should bear. Maurice and I refuse to continue to be ridiculous because of a name, and

certainly it is a subject upon which the family cannot afford to divided."

"You must understand, father, that I would not be asking this of you and mother and—and the girls—if I didn't realize its important psychology. It is a matter of business with me, father."

"I know, son—I know—if it's for your good——"

"All right, papa, if it's for his good—but what about *ours*? You can do the calling up of—Kramer, with such a name like Fish. Not me!"

"Mama—mama," said old man Fish, dusting himself down the front, a recent and vacant mannerism of his, "you don't mean that. Always what has been good for Morris has been good for us. Look at what he has done for us all——"

"I know it. I know it. But, papa—like Birdie said once, a Goldfish out of water is one of the (Continued on page 185)

You and I KILLED This MAN

By Boyden Sparkes

I FOUND the Warden's invitation in my mail one morning recently. It read:

In accordance with Section 507 of the Penal Code you are hereby invited to be present as a witness at the execution by electricity of Antonio Viandante, which will occur at this prison on Thursday—

The hour of 11 P. M. has been designated by me for such execution and you will arrange to be at my office in this prison not later than 10.45 o'clock, P. M.

I would thank you to treat this communication as confidential and advise me immediately upon its receipt of your acceptance or otherwise, so that I may make my arrangements accordingly.

To this grisly R. S. V. P. I immediately sent a telegram of acceptance.

"You're to go right in to the Warden's quarters," we were told on that Thursday night, at Sing Sing, and were then admitted to a bleak but short passageway that brought us into a double parlor with old-fashioned mantels of white Italian marble. Seated in deeply capacious, thickly upholstered chairs were half a dozen men. We met the Warden, Lewis E. Lawes, a mild-mannered, round-featured person, who happens to be one of the most energetic opponents of capital punishment. Among his cronies there with him was Father Cashin, a Roman Catholic priest who had been seeing condemned men die for more than twelve years. Then there was the prison physician, Doctor Amos Squire, the Superintendent of State Prisons, and finally a few reporters.

It was a quarter to eleven. Antonio Viandante was within half an hour of the judgment seat, but Father Cashin in clothes like our own continued to sit there. I had begun to wonder when the priest would don his vestments and go to the condemned, when the man next to me whispered:

"This fellow—the one tonight—said he'd kill Father Cashin if he came near him. Said he didn't want any religious consolation. They think maybe he's faking insanity. Tried to hang himself in his cell last night, using a spring taken from his bed. A death-house guard saw him in time. Tore the skin on one side of his throat, though. He's a big bird and they're looking for trouble."

Warden Lawes, who had gone out, had returned then and I asked him about Antonio Viandante.

"He killed his wife at Manlius, New York. He was once a police sergeant in Italy and then spent two years in an insane asylum there. Delusions, I'm told. He has been here for about a year and has been pronounced sane by alienists."

I asked another there if the condemned men were given any drugs before being taken to the chair.

"No," he said, "we never dope them. The theory is that they are entitled to be in the full possession of their faculties when it happens."

A door opened and a uniformed guard, putting his head into the room, addressed the Warden: "They're ready." Then we started.

We passed a building some one identified as the prison laundry, and turned its corner into an alleyway, the other side of which was formed by the wall of a one-story brick structure. It was the death house.

Just inside the door and to the right were half a dozen wooden benches with backs shoulder-high, suggestive of church pews. Into these filed the witnesses, scuffling their feet as awkwardly as so many schoolboys in spite of obvious efforts to be quiet. Aside from the benches there were only two other articles of furniture in the chamber. One was a white enamel table mounted on wheels, such as is used in hospitals to convey patients to and from the operating room. The other was the electric chair, an armchair, if you please. It stood throne-like about six feet from the rear wall, a black and sinister spiral of heavily insulated wire projecting over the high back.

The witnesses confronted this chair. To their left was an aperture in the wall that led into a narrow chamber displaying the utensils of a morgue. Another aperture in that wall, an archway abreast of the chair, gave access to an alcove that housed the rest of the lethal engine of which the chair was a part.

The wall behind the chair and the wall against which the ends of our benches were pushed did not meet in a right angle. Instead they merged into a blunt corner where a door had been built. On the lintel was tacked a white strip of cardboard, lettered in black, "Silence."

FOR us it was just a door, but for the creatures on its other side it was the portal of eternity.

Half a dozen blue uniformed men, each of them a heavyweight, were ranged about the room.

One of the guards stepped quietly to the door in the corner, almost stealthily placed his hand on the knob, and put his ear and his nose against the crack. He was listening for some sound on the other side. The other guards, as if in a drill, stepped closer to the chair, in a semi-circle that embraced that door. It was nine minutes past eleven.

The man with his hand on the door-knob seemed to stiffen. He moved one foot well back of him, hesitated and threw the door wide. Five men came in. The center man was Antonio Viandante.

He walked with a queer shuffle that was born of his effort to keep from stepping out of the loose felt slippers on his feet. With each step his right leg showed bare past his knee. The trouser sheathing had been slit. His dark coat was unbuttoned and no cravat relieved the white of his soft-collared shirt. His black hair had been cropped with clippers so that the white line of an old scar showed parallel with his eyebrows an inch back in the hair roots.

With his third step toward the chair Antonio Viandante sensed the presence of our staring group there in the pew-like benches. He had half turned from us, but the black glance that came to us over his thick shoulder out of angry eyes was not one I shall forget. For him we represented society; we were his jury, his tormentors; we were the owners of that electric chair, and he hated us.

Then, with curious docility, he turned his back to the chair, reached with his left hand for the arm rest and sat down as calmly as he might have eased himself into a barber's chair.

Two guards literally leaped at the wide strap harness with which it was rigged. A slender, unobtrusive man, bald on top of his head, who had been talking with Doctor Squire, turned and with a sidewise glance at the relaxed figure being strapped into place, walked into the near-by alcove. He was John Hurlburt, electrician at Auburn Prison. For his single thrust of a lever back of the scenes in this drama the people of New York paid him \$150. Perhaps as he stepped into the alcove he was thinking of what that money would buy, and then again, perhaps he was thinking of Antonio Viandante.

The two men working at the straps were tugging at the band of leather that crossed that broad, deep chest. Viandante's dark eyes observed their hands as closely as if he hoped to carry an account of their work into . . .

There was now less than one minute of life left to him. The guards worked with a frenzied speed. They grasped the straps for his head. Antonio Viandante lifted his chin a trifle. I thought he was going to speak, but a black band was drawn across his eyes. His head was pulled against the back of the chair. Another strap was fastened about his chin. Only his dry lips could be seen.

One of the uniformed men was fitting a helmet to his skull. Then, with skilled fingers, he fixed the end of the spiral of insulated



C This is the man you and I killed.

wire that had been protruding over the top of the chair. This guard leaped to a place six feet from the chair. All of them fell back a few feet as men run from an impending explosion.

Doctor Squire took up a position before and to the right of Viandante. He turned his head toward that mysterious alcove. In his right hand lifted above his head was a yellow pencil; with his left he was "fingering a watch whose little ticks are like horrible hammer blows."

Doctor Squire swung his pencil baton down to his side. There was a metallic crash, not loud, from the alcove. The man in the chair simultaneously seemed to try to escape his bonds. His torso was straining against the straps. A force stronger than his love of life was hurling itself in a maelstrom through his veins, his nerves, his brain.

An indefinable sound contended in my ears with the drone of the dynamo that was pulling up the roots of Antonio Viandante's soul. It seemed as if some one was moaning tensely through tight lips. The lips protruding between those leather bands were changing color. They became deeply red—then purple. A few bubbles formed in their juncture. There was another sound, a sputtering. I saw a wisp of greenish smoke rising from the calf of the bare leg. Above the knee where it was gripped by an electrode the white flesh was swelling as yeast dough rises in the heat of a hearth.

Doctor Squire signaled with his head to the man in the alcove. Antonio Viandante sank down into the chair as if with relief. A thick-waisted guard with reddish hair stepped to the side of the chair and pressed a towel to the wet lips. Doctor Squire shook out the coils of a stethoscope, fitted it to his ears and applied the cup to the chest of the man in the chair. He listened for an interval and then beckoned to three visiting doctors waiting on the benches. They went to the chair and listened. As they raised their heads they appeared satisfied of something, but Doctor Squire again took up a post before the chair and signaled with his arm. Antonio Viandante seemed to respond, throwing himself against his bonds.

Abruptly his hands relaxed. Then the knees slowly fell apart. The posture was that of a tired workman riding in a street-car. The reddish-haired guard with the towel was patting the darkened lips once more. Doctor Squire applied the cup of his stethoscope, raised his head in our direction, and said: "I pronounce this man dead."

As we rose from our seats two of the guards, who had slipped out of their blue coats and into white duck ones, were unfastening the straps of the chair. Another had rolled out the wheeled table.

The two white-coated figures each slipped a hand under an armpit and a knee of what had been Antonio Viandante and lifted it from the seat. It was a heavy load and the guards grunted as they raised their burden so that the drooping fold of spine and thighs would clear the table top. They let go and the body straightened out like a half empty hot water bottle. Then the door of the death house closed behind me.

AT THE Warden's house a long table was set with glittering silver and glass and spotless linen. In the center was a large vase of Chinese vermilion carnations. They had been grown by another murderer, one whose sentence had been life instead of death.

Two soft-stepping waiters, the only convicts out of their cells, served coffee, cold meats and bread.

Across from me a man helped himself vigorously to slices of boiled ham. Another man next to the Warden, a man with a solid array of gold teeth, was talking between mouthfuls.

"Yes, sir," he said portentously, "if he'd 'a' taken my advice he wouldn't 'a' been here tonight. I was talking to him half an hour before he did it. I said to him, 'If you're going to live with her, don't be fighting with her; otherwise get away and forget her.'"

"Just half an hour later he'd done it." Chased her into the butcher shop of that other fellow, who was in bed sick. It was the worst murder I ever heard of. He drove a butcher knife into her neck and right on down into her stomach. Cut through her backbone. Then he stuck that other fellow."

The speaker waited until the trusty had refilled his coffee-cup and then resumed:

"He was a jolly guy most of the time, too, and a good shoemaker. I told him——"

The man next to me whispered: "That's a deputy sheriff from Onondaga County."

The deputy, having swallowed his mouthful of ham, finished: "I told him to stay away from her; if he'd 'a' taken my advice——"

We interrupted him to say good night to the Warden.



Illustrations by
Dean Cornwell

A Story of a

The Coconut

THERE are places in the far, farthest East where time stands still. Take ship tomorrow and sail till you have passed all Europe and all Asia, and the Red Sea is a memory of long ago, and you have had time to forget Singapore. And take ship again, and again. And then you will find the Isles of Spice, forgotten, lovely, at peace. White people live there; it is always summer for them, and there are always flowers, and at dawn the spice forests smell like trees in the Garden guarded by the angel with the sword.

When you would travel, brown canoes with plaited roofs set over, or little horses in toy carriages, take you on your way. Of an evening, one sits on the stone or marble stoop of the house, talking, smoking, sucking strange fruits, unknown elsewhere; watching the fireflies prick the dusk with emerald sparks; seeing, across a strait, a great volcano rear its sinister head, and wondering if the red cloud that hovers on the cone means anything, or, as it has meant for countless generations, nothing at all . . .

I will not tell you from what days of leaden sorrow, through what gateways of despair, I drifted to the refuge of these Isles of Spice. I know you do not want to hear about that; you have had your own sorrows and only wish to forget about them. You want to know how I came to have the money and the time. The money was one hundred and sixty pounds, ticket from

Tilbury Docks. I got it, and a good bit more, by disposing of my life insurance, which had suddenly become valueless to me. As for time, I obtained that by robbing and murdering my future as lecturer in a provincial university. The crime did not lie upon my conscience; I did not mean to have a future. And there you get it.

It seems to me that a man could let himself out of life as pleasantly as ever ancient Roman did in a perfumed bath, by drifting to some dreamy spot at the world's end, to watch the last drops of his golden life-fluid drip away, and there, with one of the easy poisons of the far Orient, when all was done—

Say no
To the pulse's magnificent come and go.

Hence—the medieval town of Ternate on one of those equatorial nights that are alike almost the whole year round; the government “*pasanggrahan*” or rest-house, with nobody resting in it but myself; the smell of spice and orange flowers about a square pillared stoop, and I, Robert Barwell Knight, formerly of Warkham University, lying on a cane lounge smoking a Sumatra cigar and listening to the riot of an Arab wedding that was passing. Not unhappy, for the first time in many months. Not happy either; desirous simply of being let alone.



C "Anyone who's knocked about the pearling islands," said Bobby Young, "knows a thing or two that nobody'd believe!"

Land Where Men Forget the Past

PEARL *By Beatrice Grimshaw*

So that, when there sounded outside the front of the *pasanggrahan*, the rattle of a pony cart and the shouts of a Malay driver; when the native keeper of the house came slip-slopping sulkily from his room to swing a lantern and put out the stars—I, knowing this portended the arrival of another guest, laid down my cigar to curse with the ease and fluency the situation demanded.

The caretaker was bargaining with the driver of the cart; he had not brought back the lamp, and I could now see a tall pale figure standing, not too steadily, against the purple of the sky.

"You got any Scotch whisky, old feller?" it said.

"I think so," I answered.

"May I 'quest you—all due deference—trot it out? When I get like this—'scuse my mentioning 'bjectionable susheck—the native nectar an' ambrosia doesn't mix. Head nex' day. Good Scotch, I go to sleep; wake up like young Greece god. You like to see me like young Greece god tomorrow?"

"Assuredly," I answered him, and handed over the bottle I had opened a day or two before. There was not much out of it. I have my failings; but drink is not one of them. He took it with a bow that nearly proved his undoing.

In the dusk he tottered off to a room at the other end of the stoop. "Know my way," he proclaimed; and I heard him drop on the bed.

Next morning the "Greek god," who turned out in daylight to be a tall, terribly thin, pale-blue-eyed young Briton in a starched white suit, was up early, taking his breakfast in a way that suggested long practise in the losing game I had seen him play the night before. He did not wait for me to say anything about myself; he simply turned on the tap of his own affairs and aspirations and let it flow.

"I'm a traveler, a beastly bagman," was his first remark. "Only Briton who ever comes round this beastly place. I travel for that Australian stuff, Young's Eucalyptus Cure. The Malays lap it up like milk. They simply revel in drugs. I make a bit in salary and commish, and I wish I was dead. Of course you'd like to know why."

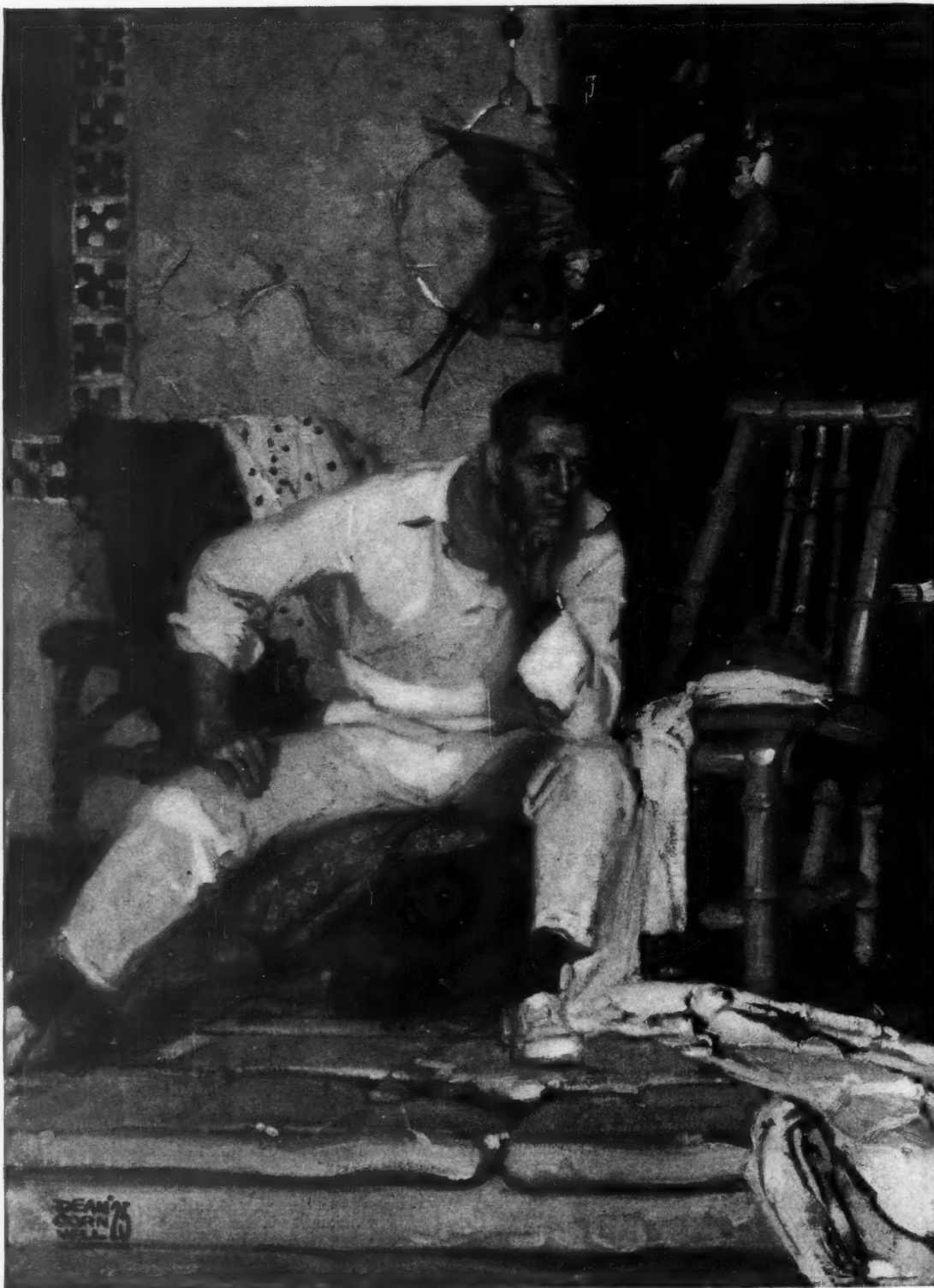
"I think you overestimate—"

"It's because I'm a come-down. I broke the bank at Monty six years ago. And it broke me. Always had to economize at home, clergyman's son and all that—you don't believe a word I'm saying, but nevertheless—"

"I assure you it's a matter of—"

"Nevertheless I'm telling the beastly truth. After a year of spending like billy-o, I couldn't settle down; they sent me to Australia, way they always do—you know—"

"I haven't any pers—"



Q, "What does your spirit tell you, daughter?" Mrs. Watts

"And I got to sleeping in the Domain with a newspaper over me—government rations and all that. Found my people were related to the Cure—my name's Young, Bobby Young. Got myself put on the road for the firm, and it put me in the pot. I drink like a fish; I'm a beastly warning and example. I'll go on drinking like a fish till I find something else to live for. And that year after I broke the bank had spoiled me out-and-out for anything that hasn't got money in it; lots and lots. And I'm as likely to find lots and lots as I am to fly over the moon. So

there you have me." He looked at me with comical blue eyes from which not yet all the boyishness had fled.

I said nothing.

Young, lighting a cigaret, went on:

"This is a queer sort of a hole. Used to be as rich as a bunch of war profiteers. Bird of paradise trade gone to beastly pot; all the old Chinks and square-heads who used to live in marble palaces and eat off silver and gold plate are as poor as Job's turkey. If I depended on them for trade, I'd go hungry. And

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asked. "She says," Marina answered, "yes, trust." In my heart the ice was gone.

yet some of the old folk have things salted away you wouldn't believe. There's an old witch over on Klabok who lives in a palace and's said to own the biggest pearl in the world. And she's so poor, or pretends she is, that she gets all her food out of the native *pasar*. What do you hink of that?"

"I haven't seen a *pasar*."

"Well, you should have. Shows you how people live. That old woman on Klabok can get five courses for an English penny over on her island if she shops well. Live on half nothing at

all. And she with a pearl as big as a walnut. And a daughter as pretty as the pearl. Ratty, if you ask me."

"I don't know that I did." Conscience impelled me to add hastily, "But it's all very——"

"'F course it is. Let's get a prau and go over and see them."

"My dear sir," I said, sitting upright, "do I look like the sort of person who would——"

"You look about forty."

"Well, I'm not," I snapped, with

(Continued on page 210)

My 3 HUSBANDS—

By Avery Strakosch

A Contrast in Men

I HAVE been married three times. My first two attempts to find happiness in matrimony ended in disaster, and yet I married again. Why?

There are several answers to that question. One of them is the fact that a pleasure shared is a pleasure doubled. To me this does not mean that one should go about striving earnestly to share pleasures with friends who may not wish to be partakers at the feast. It does mean sharing the pleasure with some one whose sympathy and understanding never fail me—in other words, with my present husband.

My forebears were artists, and the old-fashioned idea of temperament rampant bulks large in my background. For many generations the name which was mine has been linked with music. Famous singers, instrumentalists and noted impresarios were grandparents, aunts and cousins of mine.

When I was a child my father managed the careers of the most noted singers of the day. My mother had made a name for herself in another field of music. The way my father ate his eggs in the morning gave us clues to the condition of his soul. I knew by the arrangement of my mother's hair whether her success of the evening before had or had not been to her liking.

Is it strange that a family tradition about marriage had developed? There had never, so ran the tradition, been a really happy marriage among the folks who made up the family. It just couldn't be done because of the complexity of the artistic temperament. I know today that such a point of view is wholly wrong, that temperament, background, family, are bogies of the imagination, and that success or failure in marriage depend on just two things—a man and a woman. I had listened to all the dire remarks of the family concerning marriage and yet when I was nearing young womanhood I was filled with romance.

I am thirty-two years old—of course I don't look it!—and was first married at nineteen. We met at a fashionable "co-ed" school. Shortly afterward I was whisked off to a town about a thousand miles away. At school we had been only casual acquaintances, but my sudden departure must have stirred our imaginations. Anyway, after a few letters, he journeyed the thousand miles to see me. He did this several times. I was tremendously flattered, especially as his visits were brief.

"To think that he came to see me for one hour," I would say proudly—"came a thousand miles to pass one hour with me!"

Do you wonder that in my eyes he suddenly became the fairy prince? Naturally we married. His people—he came from a wealthy family—were not enthusiastic about me. I wasn't the traditional wife they had hoped he would wed, but in fairness I must say they were most kind to me. They showered me with attentions and lovely gifts.

We began our brief married life in a large, dungeon-like house with five servants. Never once did I know that marvelous feeling of privacy which I had previously taken as a matter of course. Here I felt that each one of the five servants had me under observation each minute of the time. The house was beautifully, if heavily, furnished. I had all the money I wanted to spend. Doubtless many girls would have thrived in this atmosphere, but it only depressed me.

After the first flush of surprise had worn off a bit, I was dismayed by my new life, bored with it, stifled. There was nothing to do. Only those who have been brought up among people who dream and strive and work toward a mysterious goal they call success can understand how empty this life seemed to me. I was bound in, smothered. Money, money everywhere, I used to think despairingly. (It is a condition which has not troubled me since.)

I awoke one morning feeling desperately ill, but I knew I wasn't ill physically. I was ill of this hot-house existence, bored

almost to death. I wanted freedom. I was approaching twenty-one and oh, how I wanted to live!

That night at dinner my husband and I were alone for the first time in many weeks. I heard a voice and recognized it as my own, saying faintly: "What are we going to do? I do not want to hurt you, for you are nice, but I cannot endure this life any longer. I do not love you and I do not believe you love me."

He regarded me thoughtfully for a moment, then said, "You mean that you wish to leave me?"

I nodded. My husband turned to the butler who came in just then. "I would like a little more caviar," he said calmly.

I could have screamed with relief. His wife was leaving him yet he could still be interested in food!

In six weeks' time we were divorced. I came back to New York free, determined to make something of my life.

I went to live in a smart hotel—there was a small weekly alimony—and began to look about for work. I wanted to write. Awfully nice men listened politely to me as I went from one newspaper office to another. Had I any experience? No? They smiled and shook their heads.

Gradually the hope of getting work on a daily newspaper faded, but I had resumed my maiden name and when I went about people asked, "Aren't you some relation to So-and-So?" It dawned on me that my name meant something in the field of music. I went to the editorial offices of a musical weekly paper, asked for a position and got it.

In two years' time my name was known to almost everyone in the musical world. I wrote as a member of the editorial staff, sold advertising space in the paper on commission and occasionally did an article on some musical topic for one or another general magazine. I began to make money.

I retained my position until I discovered that my knowledge of music and my name were not my only assets. I understood the artistic temperament. I had many offers to become secretary to noted foreign singers but declined them. I did not want to concentrate my work on one individuality. I was often engaged to write about these artists. I was well paid for the work. So I became a press agent, a liaison officer between the artist and the public.

AND then I met a good-looking young man who seemed to me to be on the way to becoming the world's greatest doctor. Medicine! How mysterious, I thought, how fascinating! Suddenly my life seemed very empty and glittering. I immediately bought books on the careers of great doctors. What a profession! To save lives, to be interested in the most insignificant human waif—how splendid! The doctor's wife might aid in this work for humanity. I married again.

But my second marriage was a nightmare and doubtless not for me alone. My husband had his side of the story, of course. We were two chemicals which by nature could never combine. Finally we separated.

How I managed in the next few months is another story. Any mother who has a baby to support will get on somehow. I got work. Slowly I regained my mental and financial feet. Once again I had clothes, and I began gradually to renew the friendships which had ceased with my marriage. I began to meet men, interesting men. After a bit I got a divorce, for I had made up my mind that I would not spend the rest of my life alone. I felt there must be a man in the world who would love me and be sympathetic.

Why was I not afraid to attempt a third marriage? I had every cause to be suspicious, not only of men but of my own judgment of them. But I believe there is only one permanent

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Photograph by Campbell Studios

Avery Strakosch—with her daughter Chloë—
who says that after two failures she discovered Romance

happiness—the happiness which emanates from an institution that has been the basis of our social system. Yet I was in no hurry to wed when I finally did meet the man who was destined to be my third husband.

I decided to know much more of this man than I had of the two others when I married them. For two years I saw him under varying conditions. I saw him when he was happy and when he was angry; when he was making money and when he wasn't. I saw him when he was well and when he was ill. Most important of all, I was present, watching, when he and my small daughter first laid eyes on one another. After two years of these personal viewings I knew that my prayers had been answered.

My husband is an Irishman, a temperamental Irishman. He first came to this country during the war. After being shot

down from his airplane several times, with a dozen or more broken bones to his credit, the British Government appointed him a teacher of flying and sent him here. Strangely enough, he is one Irishman who does not care about fighting. Perhaps he saw too much of it. Anyhow, I married this man from the Emerald Isle and he has proven, for me, the ideal husband. There have never been any ghosts of my previous marriages walking about. Sane, my husband takes the attitude that three persons had a bad deal from life. He believes that each one of us have our story, according to our individual perspectives. He prefers mine, naturally, and says he is grateful that neither of my former husbands could hold me.

I am not a reactionary, but I am convinced that the pendulum must swing backward—or is it (Continued on page 221)



C "Please, Hal," she said, "won't you tell me what your real name is?"
 "In the morning," said Girder, "just before we tell each other good-by, I'll tell you who I am." For that one swift moment he meant what he had said. And immediately now, instantly almost, he repented of his pledge. And his suspicions requickened and were sharpened.

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By Irvin S. COBB

An ACE In the Hole

Illustrations by
James Montgomery
Flagg

WITH their firm name, which was Girder & Trench, the members of the firm should by rights have been in the construction business. For the sake of the newspaper columnists, if for no other sake, it should have been thus. Girder & Trench, contractors, would have yielded many a juicy morsel to the wits over the country, in time becoming classics like O'Neil & Pray, who sold hymn-books in Boston, or Flagg & Gunn, dealers in military supplies somewhere else. They might even have achieved an immortality comparable with the immortality enjoyed by the famous combination of I. Ketcham & U. Cheatham, who, as you all know, long ago simultaneously practised law in each one of at least twelve different cities. Ask your oldest inhabitant.

It was too bad—from the paragraphers' standpoint it really was—that they should follow a business in nowise related to house-building. They were play-brokers. They bought and sold theatrical properties; they found dramatists for producers and, what was a harder job, found producers for dramatists; on commission or otherwise they handled moving picture rights, stock rights, vaudeville rights, foreign rights, all the various side issues and by-products and offshoots of an industry which has more ramifications than you would imagine unless you chanced to be in that line yourself.

They had been associated together for several years, starting in, as the saying goes, on their nerve and a shoe-string. There had been lean years and there had been fat ones, but on the whole they had done well. They were established; they had a first-rate clientèle. They were now coming to the breaking-away point.

Perhaps the trouble was that although they were banded by the partnership agreement they were separate and apart in nearly every other respect. A main distinction, to be specific, was the matter of their temperaments.

Begin with Jack Girder, the senior member. Mr. Girder was this kind of man: He had great luck with other men's wives but not much with his own. He was still under forty and he had been married twice and neither time successfully. He paid alimony in one quarter already; he shortly was expected to pay more alimony to the present Mrs. Girder. Paying out alimony here and there was part of the expense he had to pay for being an intermittent husband.

He also was this kind: Women, as a general thing, found him worth-while; men, as a general thing, did not. With women he had that indefinable something about him—you know, those little ways which so many women see as charming, which a good many women see as irresistible.

Men admired him—against their wills sometimes—for his shrewdness, for his audacity, for his whole-heartedness in going after whatsoever he coveted. But about once in so often, and to a canny masculine judge of human nature, it was as though a very different Jack Girder from the Jack Girder of first impressions slipped aside a pleasing mask and looked forth on the world at large with greedy and predatory eyes.

Above all else Mr. Girder likewise and furthermore was this sort of man: He was a safety player. When he bet out, let the opposition beware—he had an ace in the hole.

He figured he had an ace in the hole—a large and juicy ace—on his partner Billy Trench. He did, too. He could outthink Billy on a snap proposition, out-trigger him on a trade, out-count him when it came to casting up and dividing the profits or apportioning the losses, as the case might be.

Frequently in past days he had told himself he was a fool. It had been a mistake in the first place for him, being what he was, to link up with Trench, Trench being what he was. Well, they practically were both kids then; he knew a sight more than he had known ten years back. Anyhow, it had come to a point where he didn't propose to stand for it any longer. He didn't have to, thanks to something which had happened just lately, and, by Jake and Lee, he wouldn't!

For weeks past, relations between them had been strained. The partners met only when the demands of their mutual interests brought them together. In office hours each kept to his own office. The place smelled with hostility. At Girder & Trench's, high up in the Mid-Island Building and looking down from its windows on Broadway twenty floors below, there was the feeling of a feud well sprouted and growing.

ON a morning in early August Mr. Girder left his own desk, bearing in his hands a paper, and entered the room at the farther end of the suite where his partner had his desk. As he came through the door the younger man lifted his eyebrows.

"That will do for the present, Miss Stein," said Trench to the chief stenographer. "I'll ring for you when I'm ready to finish these letters."

"No, don't go yet, Miss Stein," said Girder. "Stay right where you are, please. This won't keep you but a few minutes." The young woman settled back in the chair from which she had half risen; Trench's puzzled eyebrows described a higher parabola.

Girder had timed his visit for an hour when she would be present. Secretly she was his partisan; she had been coached beforehand. He went on, addressing his partner:

"Trench, I've decided that it's time for a showdown between us. By now we both ought to be able to realize that we can't go on like this. I've got a proposition to make to you and I'd like for Miss Stein here to hear it as a sort of disinterested witness."

"Go ahead," said Trench. "I'm listening. I knew something like this was bound to come sooner or later."

"The sooner the better for me," stated Girder, taking him up on his words promptly. "And the sooner the better for the business too, if it comes to that. Four months ago when these original differences between us first began to arise, we figured out that this business was worth at least a hundred and fifty thousand, just as it stands. Didn't we?"

"Something like that," conceded Trench.

"Exactly like that," corrected Girder. "Those were your own calculations, as Miss Stein may recall, eh, Miss Stein?" The stenographer nodded. "By a fair appraisal it's worth a hundred and fifty thousand now, the way it stands—I mean outstanding contracts, good-will, fixtures, the trade value of the name—everything. Run the way it should be run, with everything going smoothly, it ought to be worth more than that a year from now. But I'm not talking of future prospects. I'm talking of what it's worth today, or tomorrow or next week, by your own estimate."

"All right. Then here's my proposition: I'll buy or I'll sell. Either you give me seventy-five thousand cash for my half interest and I get out, or you take seventy-five thousand cash from me and you get out and leave me the sole owner of the shop in sole control."



C. "I don't want to be crowded," said Trench. "This ultimatum of yours needs thinking over."

"What if I decline to do either?" asked Trench, looking suddenly flustered.

"In that case I go straight to a lawyer and start court proceedings to wind up the whole thing. In fact, I've already been to one; in doing this thing today I'm acting on my lawyer's advice. Well, you know where we'd both be if we took ourselves to court. Close out a business like this and you practically say good-bye to the whole works. The assets are gone and only the liabilities of outstanding debts remain. Because most of our assets are potential and not actual—the connections that've been built up, the reputation of the concern, its experience, its possibilities. Get into a lawsuit jam and either you damage them or you destroy them outright. That way we each of us have to start in all over again. The other way—the way I'm suggesting—only one of us has to start in all over again and he starts with a bank roll of seventy-five thousand dollars besides what else he may have. Take it or leave it—it's up to you."

"But this is sudden," protested Trench. "You've got the advantage. You're taking snap judgment on me at a time when I'm not in position—" He checked himself.

"Not at all," said Girder. "This paper covers that point. I had my lawyer prepare it so as to be absolutely fair. Read it. Cutting out the legal stuff, it says just this: That I'm making the proposition; that you have ninety days—three full months—from date to consider it; that in the meantime the business goes right on the same as if nothing had happened; that at the end of those ninety days either you buy for cash or you sell for cash. It gives you the choice, not me. The final decision rests on your say-so—that's how square I'm trying to be."

Saying this, Mr. Girder felt warm at the cockles of his heart. It might have required the eye of a sharpshooter to find Mr. Girder's heart, but even so it indubitably had cockles to it. You see, he inwardly was happy because he was playing on the strength of a particular and special ace in the hole. He had seventy-five thousand on hand in readily convertible securities. He meant to keep it on hand. And Trench did not have any such sum available, and conceivably there were no means by which he might raise the sum.

Before they fell out the two men had gone into a stock speculation—on a tip given to Girder by a man in the Street, but each operating individually with his own funds. And the speculation had turned out profitably for Girder but disastrously for Trench. That was because Girder had given his partner only part of the tip. He told him what to buy but he did not tell him when to sell it.

That latter and most important nub of advice he kept to himself, it being part and parcel of his private design.

This deal lay at the tap roots of their present misunderstanding. There were other things but this was the main thing. What Girder knew and what presumably Trench did not know he knew, was that the latter, having been pressed between the upper and the nether millstones of a falling market, had lost every cent of his savings, and that he was heavily in debt to his brokers, who had trusted him for margins after his capital was wiped out; moreover, was overdrawn on his personal account at his bank—in short, Trench had no money other than what he drew from the business and, to top all, had no earthly prospects of raising money in any sizable amount. Trench's nest was unfeathered and bare; Girder's was comfortably quilted.

Thanks to Miss Stein, Girder knew all this and was fortified thereby; that demure young person was in Trench's confidence as to his private affairs, but she was in Girder's private pay. She kept books on the side for Trench; she kept tab, on the other side, for Girder, so that gentleman's source of information was authentic and it was active. It was his ace in the hole.

Dealing, he flipped the next card face up on the table.

"You've just had your vacation. I'm starting tomorrow on mine. I'll be gone a month. Then, unless you have some objections, I'll run over to Paris to close up that contract with this new French playwright, Fleury, for the American rights to his product. That will take until some time in October, because whoever goes will have to stop off in London on the way back to look after that mix-up over the Henzleman productions. If you prefer, you can go yourself. But whoever goes is to act, of course, for the firm and not individually."

"Naturally you're the one to go," said Trench. "But here's the point—I don't want to be crowded; this ultimatum of yours needs thinking over."

"Exactly my idea," agreed Girder, inwardly more jubilant than ever. "I'll be away practically all the time for the next three months. That gives you three months free to make your own calculations alone. You'll have a clean swing and plenty of time to figure out what you want to do. And whichever angle you take—buying me out or else letting me buy you out—suits me. Just read that paper over and then, if you're agreeable, we'll have Miss Stein make duplicate copies of it and we'll both sign 'em and each one of us will take a copy and lock it up in his safety deposit box. Or you can ask some lawyer of your own choosing to give you his opinion first."

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"Only, you'll have to move fast; today is all the day of grace you've got. Tomorrow I'm going to Newport and this option thing has got to be arranged before I go. If not—well, I've already told you what I'll do. My lawyer is ready on an hour's notice to go ahead and start proceedings to dissolve the partnership. So get busy, please."

With that, Mr. Girder turned on his heel and walked out of Mr. Trench's office. Once outside with the door closed behind him, he made the gesture of squeezing something very tightly in his two hands.

So the upshot was that Mr. Girder had his way and, being well content with the progress his plot had made, he took pleasant reflections and pleasant day-dreams with him when he went next day to Newport. Mr. Girder liked to go to Newport on his vacations. He had been there before. Since he could not actually taste of so-called exclusive society, he liked to be where he could smell it.

On the chair-car he met a woman. She was a woman in her early thirties, still pretty despite a certain haggardness about her and a look of disillusionment, of great weariness out of her eyes, and plainly well-bred and, as soon became plain to see, also a lonely woman. Her name was Mavis Levin and she was a widow. She told him who and what she was on the car. He told her his name was Harrison—Henry Harrison. It was a name he already had used for various romantic services. It had the merits of being commonplace and easily remembered.

Under this dependable alias he introduced himself to her before the train was an hour out of Grand Central. They occupied adjacent seats. He took note of his neighbor's slim, well-kept hands, her smart plain traveling gown, her languor, of the air she had of wanting companionship. Except for her pallor and the disfigurement of a slight pouchiness under her eyes, she would have been a beautiful woman. With his instinct for lady-killing adventures he marked all these externals almost as soon as he came aboard and found her there in the next seat. He set her down for a possible conquest. He set down all attractive strange women for possible conquests.

He did not rush matters, though. He bided his time and his opportunity, meanwhile studying her profile.

When luncheon was announced and she arose to go back to the dining-car, she staggered passing him and almost fell. He jumped to his feet and caught her deftly and steadied her. For a moment he held her, with his arms around her and her slender body pressed close to his. It was an auspicious beginning, he decided, even while she was thanking him.

When she returned from the diner twenty minutes later she nodded and smiled and there followed talk between them. It was inconsequential talk. He felt, though, that he was making progress. He exerted himself to be entertaining, to show a natural friendliness, a deferential courtesy and interest. There was more than a trace of the cavalier and the courtier about Mr. Girder; there was a smooth veneer of surface gentility to top-coat the real nature of the man. Who was it said that the most poisonous reptiles nearly always have the prettiest patterns of skin?

Pretty soon he knew her name—the truth of the information being confirmed by a swift glance at the initials "M. L." on her black suitcase—and she knew the name he chose to give her as his own, she accepting it without question. It developed that they both were bound for Newport, that each was traveling alone and that each meant to spend four weeks or so in or near Newport. Next it came out that she had never before been in Newport.



"You'll have to move fast," replied Girder. "Today is all the day of grace you've got."

She lived in Denver and had come East because she needed change of climate and the sea air. Her physician—she spoke with the manner of a semi-invalid—had recommended these.

Telling him this she conveyed more plainly than ever the impression of being a lonely woman, more or less aimless in her movements, constantly seeking for something lacking, something never yet attained but desperately craved for. Along here he was able to volunteer facts which might be helpful to her. He told her about the hotels, comparing them as to their merits or demerits; about Bailey's Beach, about the life of the wealthy cottagers. So on and so forth. He ventured to hope that if he could be of any possible aid to her she would not hesitate to call upon him. There was nothing about him to make her suspect that thus early he meant to press the acquaintance beyond conventional bounds.

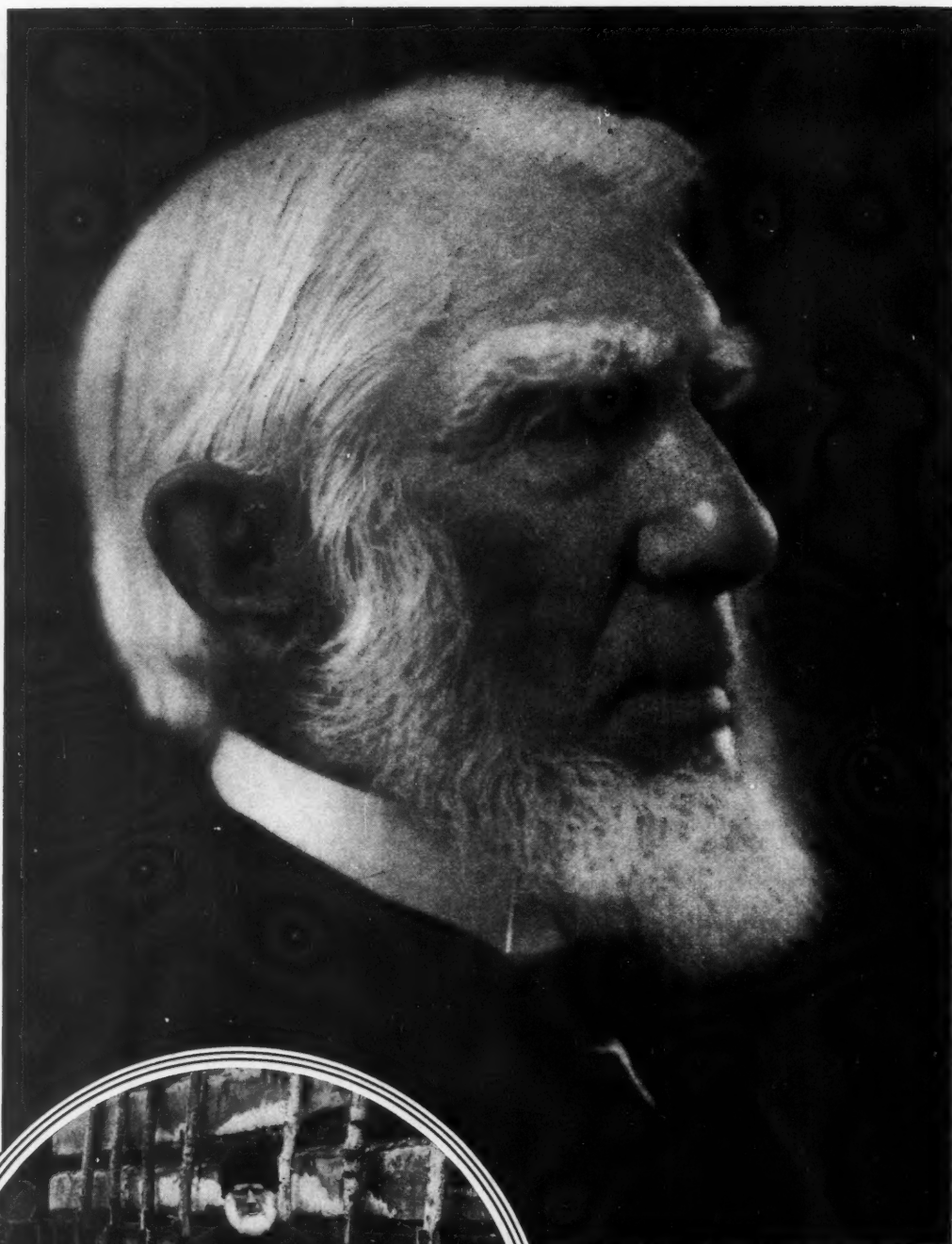
All the same, before they parted at the Newport station, she to go to her hotel and he to his, an engagement had been made for meeting next morning. They met next morning, strolled together, had luncheon together, had dinner together that night.

This was the outcome: On the third day—so swiftly did he advance his cause once he had her confidence—they went to a quieter and smaller and much more demure resort farther up the coast, and as man and wife—"Mr. and Mrs. James Williams of Chicago"—they registered at a sedate hotel, taking a furnished cottage on the hotel grounds with the option of having their meals served in the cottage or of dining at the hotel, a hundred yards away, should they care to do so.

But first, before he carried her off to this place, Mr. Girder, being as aforestated a safety player and one overlooking no bets, took certain precautions. From his pockets he removed every letter or tab or memorandum, and from his clothing every tailor's tag which might have identified him in his proper person. In these piping risky times of Mann Laws and such, a perfect incognito was an ace in the hole too. He arranged to have his mail reforwarded to a lock box in the local post-office.

Where they had hidden themselves away, the pair of them spent four illicit weeks in their cottage, living quietly, comfortably, placidly as any respectable married couple might have lived.

To the woman it was a great and thrilling event in life; she showed that in a hundred ways (Continued on page 132)



Photograph by Topley, Ottawa



John R. Booth at
98 still follows this schedule:

| | |
|----------------|-------|
| Gets up | 7:30 |
| Breakfasts | 8:30 |
| Goes to Mill | 9:30 |
| Home to Dinner | 12:30 |
| Back to Mill | 2:30 |
| Home | 6:15 |
| Supper | 6:30 |
| Goes to Bed | 10:00 |

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98 *A Millionaire— And Still Working*

*The Story of the Most Remarkable
Man I Ever Met*

By Frazier Hunt

THIS is a story almost too remarkable to be believed.

Out at the J. R. Booth mills in Ottawa, Ontario, any morning about nine-thirty or ten you will see an elderly gentleman with an old-fashioned white beard going about the great timber yards, saw mills and wood-pulp factory, giving orders and generally supervising the work of 1800 men. He looks as if he were about sixty-five years old.

He is ninety-eight years old.

At forty-five his doctors told him he would die—but he fooled them.

At sixty-one he took out a "straight life" insurance policy for \$40,000, and two years ago, at ninety-six, the company paid him in full. He is the only man who ever beat a straight life policy without dying.

At eighty-eight he broke three ribs and his left leg in two places, and was told he simply had to die—and again he fooled them.

He is one of the richest men in Canada and the largest individual owner of pine timber in the world.

He is still in active control of his vast fortune, and his mind and memory are today as sound as they were thirty years ago when he was a youngster of sixty-eight.

He is an iron man.

In many ways I think he is the most unusual and picturesque figure I have seen anywhere in the world. This strange Napoleon of the North Woods who worked his way up from an uneducated lumberjack to the Pine King of Canada, refused a dozen times and still refuses to take the count. He willed to live—and he did live.

Now wandering around Canada in search of stories, a score of people told me tales of this marvelous old man. Most of these yarns I did not believe, but I was so interested that I made up my mind to see for myself. There in the mill offices in Ottawa one morning Jackson Booth, the eldest son, introduced me to a ruddy-faced, blue-eyed, elderly man with silver-gray hair and a grayish beard, who walked with only a slight stoop.

"Father, this gentleman has come a long ways to talk to you," the junior Booth explained.

The ninety-two-year-old wonder gave me a cordial and crisp handshake and motioned for me to take a chair by the window. "Sit down, and maybe I can learn something," he said with a smile.

"You can learn nothing from me, but I can learn a great deal from you—the secret of long life and happiness," I answered.

A smile broke out about his wise lips. "That is a pretty hard one," he said after a pause.

"I suppose it's health."

"Yes, that's it—learn how to take care of yourself."

"What are your secrets?" I asked.

He didn't answer for some seconds. Then he went on: "Plain food and not too much of it. Plenty of fresh air and sunshine. Drink lots of water—preferably hot water. Keep your system open and clean with water, and if you find yourself worrying too much, get out in the air and do a little real physical work."

I told him that sounded so simple that nobody would do it.

"Well, I had to do it," he answered. "When I was forty-five I was a sick man. I suffered badly from stomach trouble. One day the doctor said to me, 'Booth, either you will have to stop working and take a six months' sea voyage or else take up a permanent residence in Sandy Hill.' Sandy Hill was one of our leading cemeteries at that time. I told him I was too busy to take a sea trip, and I didn't have any time to go to Sandy Hill, so he promised me I'd die.

"Of course that scared me and I got to thinking about myself. The first thing I did was to buy a sixty-acre farm near town, and I would go out there whenever I got worrying about things and just work around fixing up the place. At the same time I was going after the proposition of fixing up my health too. I couldn't digest my victuals, so I figured there must be something wrong with the victuals. I discovered for one thing that I was working about eighteen hours a day and living mostly on coffee and tea. Well, the first thing I did was to stop that foolishness and I have never drunk any coffee or tea since. Then I found that the kind of bread I was eating was wrong, so I started having a special biscuit made for me that was two-thirds whole wheat and one-third bran. I would keep these ten days or two weeks before I ate them.

"Then I found out that most meat was bad for me but that I could eat bacon all right. Eggs, too, agreed with me, but instead of having them cooked different ways I would have a 'scalded' egg served to me two or three times a day. They would simply put the egg in a cup of hot water and bring it in to me and the egg would just be warmed through. Then I found out that I could eat certain vegetables, stewed onions particularly.

"It was an awful job to overcome my worrying about my business, and the only way I could do this was to get out into the sunshine and open air and do manual work. It used to look mighty foolish to my friends and my sons to see me doing the sort of work I could get a man for one-fifty a day to do, but I was taking my mind off my worries and getting good exercise at the same time."

I ASKED him for an average daily menu. He told me that he varied a little bit, but as a rule now at ninety-eight, he had for breakfast a baked potato, bacon, one "scalded" egg and some of his special whole wheat and bran biscuits soaked in cream. For dinner at noon he had soup, boiled onions and other vegetables, possibly a little meat, another "scalded" egg and some more of his special biscuits. For supper he ate only an egg and some biscuits with cream.

This is what he eats at ninety-eight and what he has been eating for the last ten, twenty, thirty years. He figured it all out himself—some of it strictly against the doctor's orders. The fact is, he laughs at doctors' orders, just as he has laughed at other orders. He has simply refused to quit and pass on.

When he was eighty-six years old a heavy twelve-foot plank fell on him, broke three ribs in his back, cut a great gash in his face and fractured both bones in his left leg just below the knee. They carried him home to die—the doctors did. There was absolutely no hope for him.

When they tried to give him an anesthetic so they could set his leg he shook his head. "I don't want none of that stuff. Just let me hold your hand, son. I want to see how they do this job."

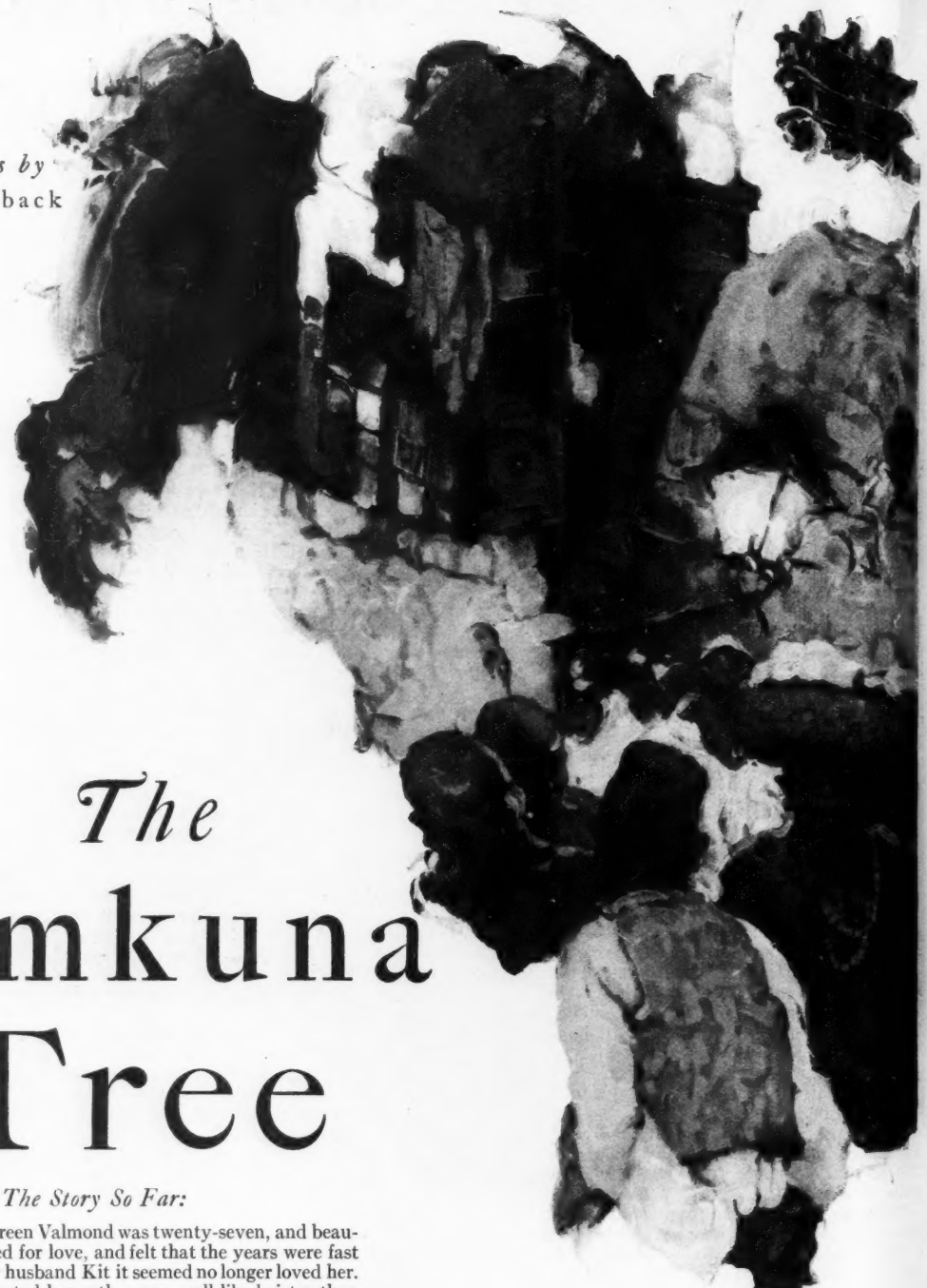
They set his leg, bound up his back and sewed up his face—so he could die nice and pretty. When he refused to go out the local doctors called a specialist from Montreal, who said: "It is unbelievable, but he has a slight chance to pull through if we can stave off pneumonia. But there is absolutely no chance if he ever gets outdoors again—it would be fatal."

Two mornings later, after his son, Jackson Booth, had left the house, he called for the trained nurse. "Get my coonskin coat and my wheel-chair and wheel me out to the open veranda," he ordered.

The nurse flatly refused. She told (Continued on page 120)

B y C Y N T H I A S

Illustrations by
Walt Louderback



The Umkuna Tree

The Story So Far:

THOUGH Cathreen Valmond was twenty-seven, and beautiful, and longed for love, and felt that the years were fast fleeting by, her husband Kit it seemed no longer loved her. At least, he treated her rather as a well-liked sister than a wife, and Cathreen was left to weep lonely tears at every dawn.

This had been ever since he had come on to Rhodesia three years before. The early period of their marriage, in the thick of the Great War, had been normal enough. But, arriving on the veld alone, Kit had unaccountably tried to dissuade Cathreen, left in London, from joining him on their farm, Spitzkoppies; and when she finally came willy-nilly, he had at once assumed toward her the relationship of a companion instead of a husband.

The ship that brought Kit to Africa had also brought the Venners—Sheila and her husband Charles, the latter a morose man, a physician whose face had been horribly scarred in the war, and who was hiding it away from his fellow men in the lonely veld; and Binnie Ronalds, bachelor, a sufficiently charming fellow but, to put it colloquially, an inveterate grafter and sponger on his neighbors. Binnie's farm lay on one side of the Valmonds, the Venner farm on the other. Before Cathreen

arrived, Binnie and Kit had seen a good deal of the Venners, and both of them expressed great sympathy for "poor Sheila," tied down to a selfish and brooding husband. She had had one child, the blue-eyed baby Alannah, on whom Charles doted.

Sheila was indeed a charming woman, as Cathreen found when she came one day for luncheon, and to talk over Cathreen's plans for landscaping Spitzkoppies; though there was some quality in her tawny eyes that Cathreen thought would not be good in friendship.

How very charming her neighbor could be, though, Cathreen did not discover until Binnie and Kit, who had been in the neighboring town of Bangwelo, arrived home for tea. Then Sheila blossomed out like a sensuous rose, for the men only, and they quite evidently responded to her allure.

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“I had an in-the-gloaming interview on the balcony with Sheila,” said Binnie.

vanity!” she said, and left him. He stared after her, mute with astonishment; and then there rang through the house a sound never before heard in Spitzkoppies—the sharp snap of a key turning in the lock of Cathreen’s bedroom door.

It shocked him into the breaking of quite a good rule. He hastily poured his third whisky, usually reserved until later, and drank it.

The Story Continues:

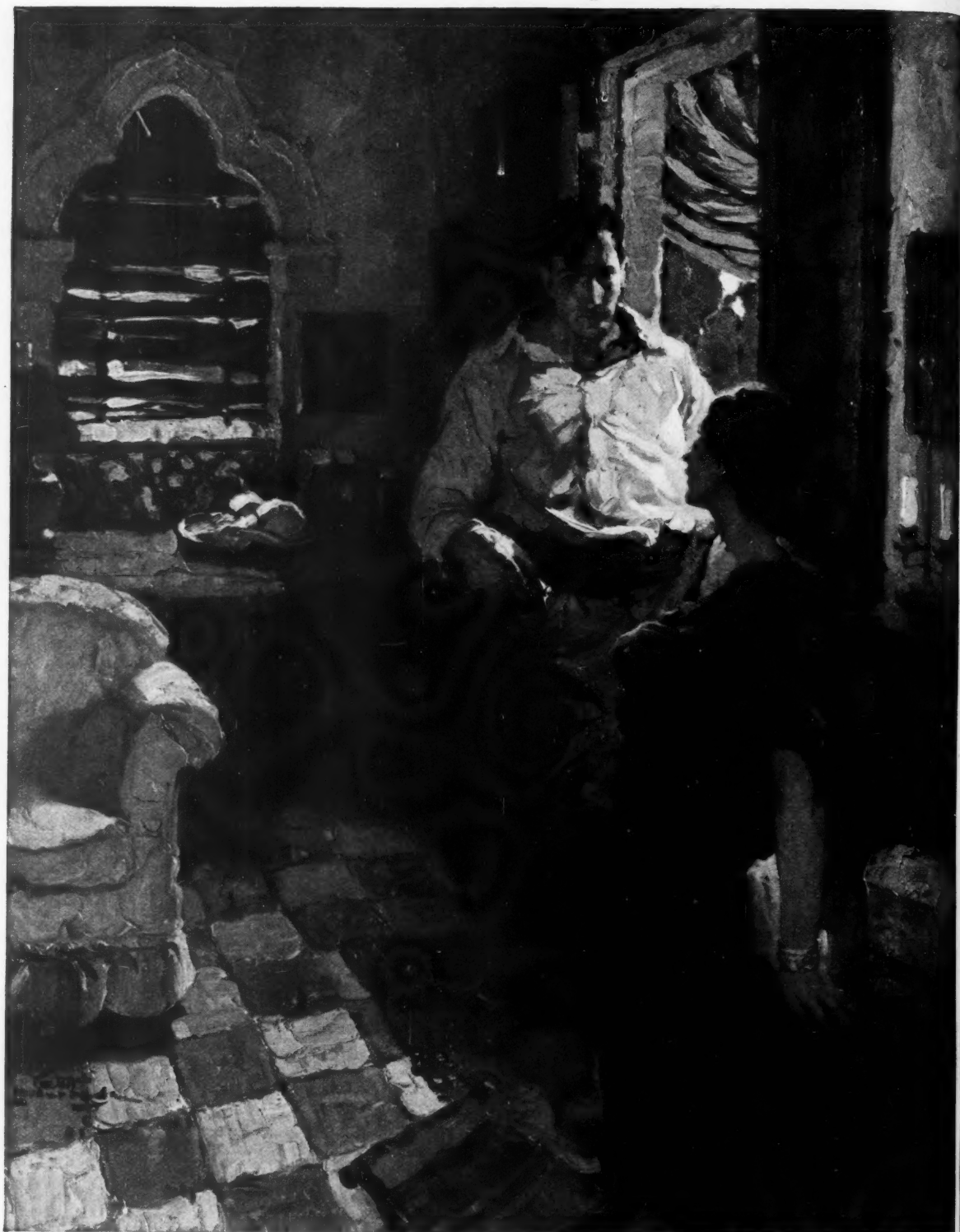
NEVERTHELESS, it took more than that to disrupt for long either the good temper of Major Kit Valmond or his excellent appetite. He had much to be thankful for, and told himself so. First and foremost that Binnie did not return. Secondly that he was not obliged to sit through a meal with a sulky woman. Not that he had ever known Cathreen to sulk. But then neither had he ever known her to flare up and slam out of a room before. Anyway, it never bothered him to be alone. Only meant bed a little earlier than usual, that was all. And Pepys’ Diary to read himself to sleep with. He always enjoyed old Sam Pepys.

“It will be all right in the morning,” was his last waking thought, secure in his experience of Cathreen’s sweet temper.

The gay party ended on an unpleasant note. On the mantel there was a photograph of Kit which Sheila had greatly admired during the afternoon, and had been on the point of asking for—a request that Cathreen had quickly forestalled, since this was a picture associated with her honeymoon, and she especially prized it. Now, however, as she was about to go home with Binnie for escort, Sheila boldly asked Kit to give it to her; and he acceded readily enough. But with a swift movement Cathreen snatched the picture out of Sheila’s hand and restored it to its place.

Kit, when the other two had gone, had been rather nasty with Cathreen for making a scene that “made me look rather a fool.”

Suddenly Cathreen swept round on him with a blaze in her eyes. “And that’s all you think of—all you care about—your



C. "What do you want?" Cathreen asked. "I want your husband," said Charles Venner—his voice became so soft it scarcely reached her—"to shoot him like a dog."

In the morning, however, when he prepared as usual to follow Pansy into his wife's room, he found instead that tea waited on the front stoop, and it transpired that the *Inkosikas* had been up and abroad for some time.

"*Hamba lapa gar-din*," proffered Pansy, with a dramatic gesture towards the wilds. Cathreen had in fact risen at dawn and slipped out by the back way to the tropical garden.

"He is not going to make a smoking room *only* of my bedroom," she told herself turbulently. "I have made him too free of it—

and of myself." That bitter conclusion needed all her self-control to dismiss.

She had to sit a long while on a stone, staring at the still trees, before she could get quiet into her soul, and start thinking of the work in hand.

"There a mass of blue salvia, with a thatched, low-walled tea hut in the middle of it . . . That big yellow thorn tree dripping with wild scarlet honeysuckle . . . Sentinel euphorbias there, at the end of a vista of candelabra aloes . . . That group of

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teak draped with apricot-colored bougainvillea, and a stone seat in the shade."

Every scheme differed from those she had planned the day before with Mrs. Venner. Her heart burned against that woman. Foolish of her, she knew; silly and childish; nothing in the whole thing but vanity—a vain woman's wish to show off her power over men. And on Kit's part, what? Just foolish pride in making careless, generous gestures, the gesture of disdainfully giving a woman anything she asked for—was that it?

Cathreen had gone over the scene again and again during the night, remembering how the two men had looked at Sheila sitting there in a sort of insolence of beauty and power. She had reminded Cathreen of a beautiful feline thing rippling its shining fur and purring softly under male eyes. And Binnie's light blue mad ones had grown slightly madder; Kit's dark blue ones a darker blue.

Perhaps, there are some women who can rouse those looks, thought Cathreen, and perhaps I am not one of them (her heart contracted painfully). I think I would disdain to be—but I don't know—perhaps I am merely jealous. At any rate I would disdain to rouse all men and sundry—or to steal such looks from another woman's man.

But had Sheila tried to steal or to rouse? Could she, Cathreen, be sure after all that there was anything in it except her own prejudice against something that offended fastidiousness but was otherwise harmless? She determined to try to believe this, to act at any rate on this assumption. And the beautiful peace of the morning helped her resolution.

It was seven o'clock. Tea would be ready. She rose and strolled homewards to find Kit awaiting her on the stoop. Of course, having seen her a long way off, he was prepared with an imperturbable don't-give-a-hang expression, into which, nevertheless, stole an element of relief when she greeted him with a morning face. Seemingly everything was as usual.

But only seemingly. After an emotional disruption between two people things are never quite the same. They both knew that a barrier of constraint had arisen, and that thenceforward things would not be as they were.

In the first place Kit discovered almost at once that his wife was no longer a sick woman—nor even a delicate one. She rose now before he did, and was at work in the garden. Therefore there was an end to morning teas in the bedroom. In fact she scarcely patronized her bedroom at all. He noticed that she had ceased even to take her afternoon siesta on her bed, but napped in a deck chair on the stoop instead. Which was ridiculous. Of course she could not rest so well there.

He was confirmed in this belief when she began to retire earlier at nights. "I'm tired this evening," began to be a regular formula with her, and off she'd go, with a cheerful "Good night!" leaving him with nothing to do but talk to the dogs and go to bed with old Sam Pepys—which was all very well you know, confound it!

Another disturbing thing was that she now took to going to town frequently; would be ready to start any time, any hour. No reason against her enjoying herself, of course; if she did enjoy herself among a lot of gossiping women, which he doubted. But it did him out of the delightful sensation, only recently acquired, of having some one waiting for him when he came back from town. He had not fully realized before that it was this that really made home for a man.

And of course when there were three of them in the car she would sit at the back, and then Binnie insisted on sitting there too. Confound the fellow! Blah, blah, blah, all the way in. Cathreen taking it all in too, apparently. Pippins! Bit of a bird of a liar, Master Binnie. But surely she wasn't such a fool as to put any credence . . . Women, however—well, you never knew what they'd believe till you tried.

Pretty sickening to have Binnie eternally on the job like this. A man's life wasn't his own, let alone a man's car, and a man's home. Shortly Binnie would have to be jolly well told that there was a limit to hospitality.

There was an evening when things came to a head. A long day of unmitigated Binnie had culminated in the felicity of listening to Binnie's recital of the day's doings to Cathreen while he rapidly flattened sundowners and patently developed a scheme to stay to dinner. If that were all, it would have been quite enough; but it was not all.

The lights were lighted and Cathreen sat mending a black silk stocking. A refreshing picture for a jaded man to come home to after a hard day of backing losers, swallowing immense

amounts of dust, and talking a lot of drivel to women not nearly so delightful to look at as his own wife.

"His own wife"—at that combination of words something moved vibrantly in Kit Valmond's breast, surprising him. He stood with his back to the empty grate, legs slightly apart—the characteristic attitude of an Englishman on his own hearth indulging in not very mystical meditations; in fact he was at that moment formulating in his mind a few well-chosen and thoroughly blasphemous words.

Cathreen had on one of those blue gowns of hers, thin and filmy like morning mist; and the rays from two tall candles, between which she sat, threw little dancing lights across her slender face and cloudy hair. Her lashes lay in a dark line across her cheek; and a faint smile upon her gravely closed mouth. Intent on her work, there was something still and mysterious about her, something reminiscent of Some One to whom men raise their eyes in reverence—not with the light of covetousness in them. Again that curious commotion in Kit Valmond's breast. A fierce thought shot through him:

Not Binnie Ronalds's eyes, anyway—and not Kit Valmond's wife!

His blue eyes went suddenly dark and the blood of killing came into them, blurring his vision, so that for a moment he could not see the picture before him. Then it cleared, and he realized that he must have made some movement as fierce as his thoughts, for they were looking at him—Cathreen with clear, inquiring gaze, Binnie quizzically. He turned his back abruptly and lighted a cigaret, staring at the mantelpiece to regain composure. There something gave him pause. The arrangement of photographs was different. In a second he recognized that the one of himself, about which all the fuss had been made, was missing.

"Where's my photo?" he asked in almost childlike surprise.

"Your photo?" repeated Cathreen absently. "Oh—I sent it over as a gift to Mrs. Venner the morning after she was here. Don't you remember she expressed a fancy for it?"

Remember! He turned and stared in blank amazement. Binnie too had his mouth and his eyes agog with delighted astonishment. Which annoyed Kit so much that he rapped out sharply and rudely:

"You'd better clear out, B'nnie!" adding more kindly a second later, "if you intend to reach home for dinner."

But it was too late for kindness. The séance had broken up, and Binnie, with a dark, offended expression as unbecoming as it was unusual, was bidding his hostess good night. Kit, without waiting for affectionate farewells, strode out. It was the hour for his bath. But as he passed his wife's bedroom, its door now standing ajar, he paused just for an instant, and with what he may have believed to be an impulse, but which was really an intention that had been brewing in his mind ever since that night when the sound of a key in the lock snapped through the house, he slid his hand round the door and abstracted the key. Then he continued on his way, whistling like a blackbird.

The moment she closed her door that night, Cathreen missed it—and stood still, wondering what to do. Should she call Kit? But, hastily, she decided against that. If he had not noticed that lately she locked her door, why call his attention to it? If he had, he might only give her one of his smiling ironic stares. Ask, perhaps, whose intrusion she feared? Horrid thought; pride reared and cheek reddened at it. Better say nothing. Look for it in the morning. Probably it had been knocked out, and Pansy perhaps had picked it up and had put it away.

After all she had been nearly six months on the Rhodesian veld without any reason for locking her door. Until now . . .

Not that mortified pride and an aching heart could be called reasons. She braided her hair before her glass, looking bitterly at that woman who, in spite of her whiteness and darkness, slender lines and supple curves, the fever that burned in the palms of her cold hands and made her mouth a red flower, could not get what belonged to her. Bright bitter tears scorched her eyes, but she brushed them away and knelt down to say her prayers, blew out the candle and got into bed. Darkness is best, when you are despaired.

It must have been nearly three hours later, certainly after midnight, when her troubled mind, at last drowsily approaching the portals of sleep, was roused full awake again by a movement in the room, a touch on her hair.

For a second fright seized her; but almost instantly she knew who it was kneeling there beside the bed, murmuring her name over and over, as though he found in (Continued on page 160)

By Channing Pollock

Why We Have To Hit the Pace that Kills

*The intimate story of a man who would
like to live in a LIGHTHOUSE*

THE average successful man spends the first half of his life seeking prominence and the last half seeing obscurity.

The most significant manifestation of our time is the failure of success. This article is intended to tell you why.

Because, of course, you don't believe it. I didn't, and wouldn't, and neither will any other young fellow in "the first half."

I find it difficult to begin this heart-to-heart talk—these admissions of a man who wanted to get there and, having done it more or less, wonders where he's got, and why, and what of it. In these memoir-able days, honest confession is good to be sold—and liable to be misunderstood. I'm tempted to begin by swearing that I'm not disgruntled, or a crab, or a nervous wreck, or obsessed with my own importance, and the notion that nothing's right in the world but me. I'm tempted not to begin at all. However, onward Christian Soldiers, and, as every writer knows, the first hundred words are the hardest!

Really, though this ought to be autobiography, it isn't. As in mathematics x is the symbol of the unknown, here I is the symbol of a type. I am a hundred thousand Americans. Like most of my kind, I want to live in a lighthouse—but in all probability I never shall. I'm tired, and I know what makes me tired, and if I am a crab or a nervous wreck—my denial notwithstanding—so are nine men out of ten who have got anywhere near the top in America.

I know as many "big" people, in every walk of life, as anybody who doesn't make a business of it, and you may take my word that every one of them is asking, "What's it all about?"

"I'm caught in the machine. I always said I'd quit when I got to a certain point, but now I've passed that point and I can't quit. What's it all about?"

"My wife's sore as a pup because I've never any time for her. How can I go to dinners and parties? And if I did, I can't talk anything but business or enjoy anything but work. What's it all about?"

"I made a hundred and eighty thousand dollars last year, but I don't get a minute to have any fun with it. I'd give fifty thousand to go fishing. I grind day and night—and what for? What's it all about?"

Most of these men are quite naive and resigned, and puzzled at finding anything wrong with our system—or their own. "Funny!" a business man said to me the other night, his haggard face thrust over his desk, his bloodshot eyes blinking wearily. "Funny. My head aches. Do you ever get so you can't think? Guess I'll lie down ten minutes and catch my second wind! You know, I've been having a smash-up every year or two!"

"My confounded old body!" exclaimed another. "It won't go the distance!"

It isn't the people who don't make the grade who find it difficult; it's the people who do. As Rennold Wolf used to remark when we were collaborating on musical comedies and I complained because an idea wasn't born every minute: "If it were that easy, everybody'd do it!"

"Accidents will happen"—but they're not common in careers.

Once upon a time I thought poorly paid clerks made up the clientèle of the cheap restaurants. I was wrong; it's millionaires. With an hour for luncheon, the clerks have time to loiter, but stroll into an automat at noon and note the prosperous business men swapping nickels for something to be swallowed in haste and repented at leisure. Look around at dusk and you'll observe that the strap-hangers carry newspapers with cross-word puzzles to occupy their evenings. The loungers in limousines clasp

bulging brief bags. For them the whistle never blows; the end of a perfect eight-hour day will find them still at their desks, beginning a five-hour night.

Leaving my office late on Thanksgiving, I asked the elevator man as I went down:

"Everybody here today?"

"No," he replied. "Only the bosses."

The wages of success—like the wages of sin—is death. Only war provides a greater casualty list. Ponder the headlines. "Noted Clergyman Suffers Collapse." "Famous Author, Nerves Wrecked, Blows out His Brains." How many people without 'em ever commit suicide?

Every week I'm besought to send two or three cheering letters to as many men of my craft in hospitals or sanitariums. Addressing one—not unknown to this magazine—the other day, I wrote, from the bottom of an envious heart:

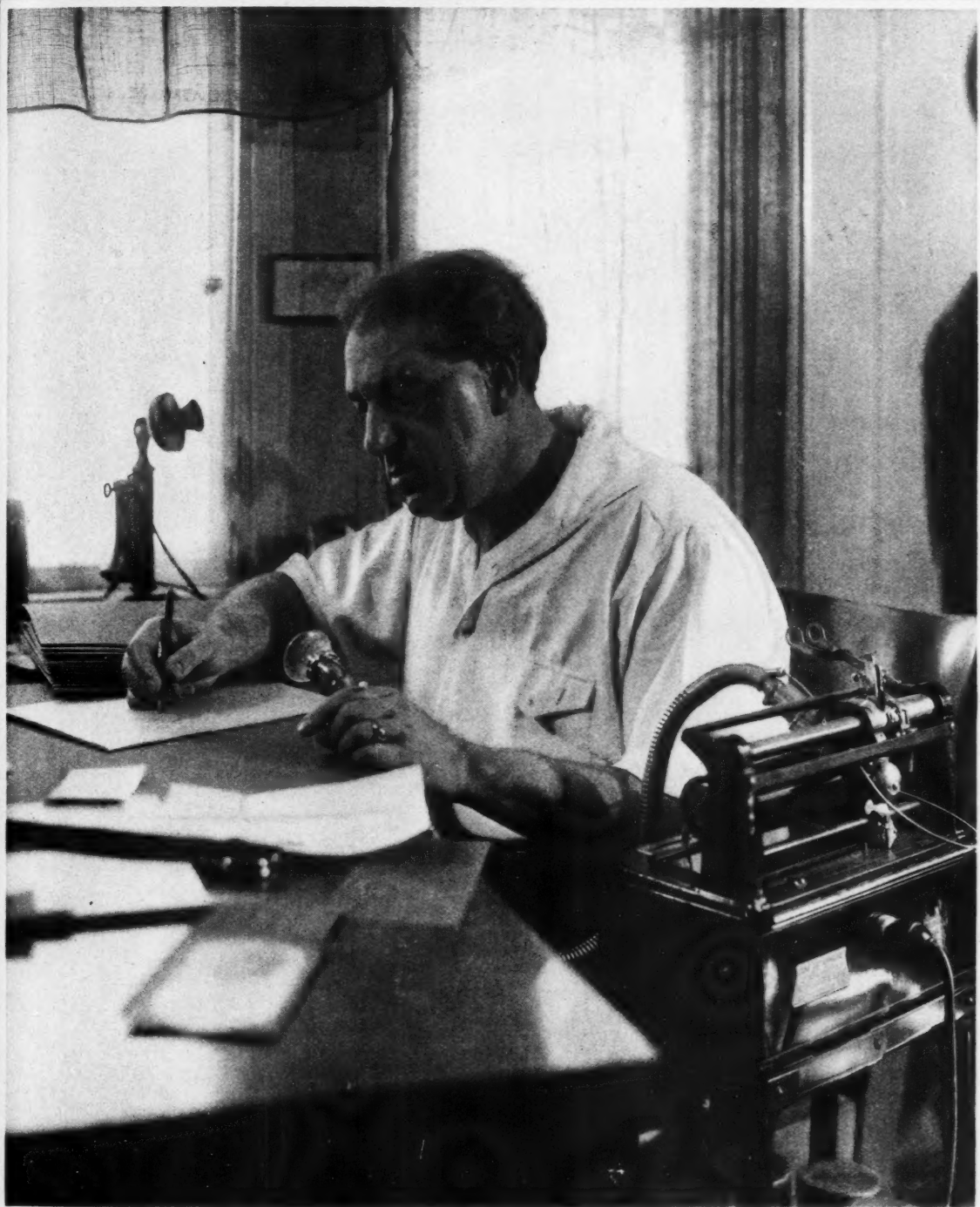
"Your wife tells me that you are enjoying another sojourn in a rest-cure. The news reminds me of the family physician, sent in to attend a sick butler, who, hearing confession that the man had taken to bed only because his employer owed him a hundred dollars, remarked: 'She owes me nine hundred. Move over!' If I could choose any habitation on earth for myself at the present moment it would be either a hospital or a nice, secluded jail . . . After the past three years, the one man I don't understand is the lucky devil serving a life sentence who applies for a pardon!"

A FEW paragraphs ago I spoke of "my office." Were you surprised? Popular fancy, I know, pictures the author jotting inspirationally among the soft tones and tomes of his tranquil library. Or, in an earlier era, scribbling in a garret, or between imbibings in the back room of a soon-to-be-tableted saloon. If the literary life were like that—if it were even the least bit literary—I shouldn't be protesting the penalties of success, or sympathizing wordily with the tired business man. No writer should complain of writing, any more than a workman should complain of work. In successful authorship, as in other pursuits, it isn't the authorship that makes trouble; it's the success. The aspiring novelist or dramatist may dream in library or garret. That's one reason the book or play that "lands" him is usually good. "Landed," he joins the ranks of the disturbed and harassed. That's one reason he rarely does anything else worth while.

Success is a business in itself. To foster and develop it, and make what people call "the most of it," is a job requiring as much skill and industry as that which created it. One interview rejected, ten dinners refused, a hundred well-meant letters unanswered can go far toward spiking your best guns. Writing, too, is a business, and nowadays the business takes so much time and attention that there isn't much left for the writing. Modern authorship isn't a matter of oily locks and bow ties, but of contracts and attorneys, files and card indices, secretaries and the dictaphone.

The "overhead" of my business is greater than that of my friend the wholesale coffee merchant—and so is the underhead. In the reverberating and sea-secured fastness of a lighthouse, I guarantee to turn out three thoughtful plays a year. In my town flat or my office, or in the club-house known as my "country-home," I'm lucky to complete one play in three years.

In theory—when I am not lecturing, or giving expert testimony in one of the daily dozen plagiarism suits, or rushing off to produce



Photograph by Campbell Studios

C. Channing Pollock, author of "The Fool," "Roads of Destiny,"
et cetera, in his office—the modern version of the old-time writer's garret.

a play in London or Paris—in theory, I write diurnally from eight in the morning until three in the afternoon. Actually, in the fifteen hours I have spent on it so far, this article has been halted at various times by the following unsettlements:

1. Arrival of a cable relating to sudden exigency in London (where "The Fool" is running), and requiring instant answer.
2. Summons in a suit brought by a gentleman who had performed a small service and wanted a large fee for it. (Nothing else is as expensive as the reputation of prosperity.)
3. Telephone message from president of club giving dinner in my honor tomorrow and desperate over last-minute mishaps involving immediate consultation.

4. Ditto from visiting journalist, very much at my disposal in London, and not likely to understand delay in placing myself at his in New York.

5. Boy with manuscript of old play about to be "released" for stock companies. (Thirty copies must be in the post by night, and failure to read such manuscripts before they are in rehearsal has been known to result in costly and ludicrous mistakes.)

6. Word from composer of song whose lyric I dashed off Monday in aid of a most deserving theatrical charity, and who professes himself sitting, one finger poised above the piano-keys, unable to proceed with the next note until I supply a vowel sound instead of a consonant.

The above list is composed only of (Continued on page 136)



C. *Celia Gregg was handsome in spite of her efforts to be handsomer.*

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The Love Nest

By RING LARDNER

The Inside Story of a
HAPPY MARRIAGE

Illustrations by Harrison Fisher

"I'll tell you what I'm going to do with you, Mr. Bartlett," said the great man. "I'm going to take you right out to my home and have you meet the wife and family; stay to dinner and all night. We've got plenty of room and extra pajamas, if you don't mind them silk. I mean that'll give you a chance to see us just as we are. I mean you can get more that way than if you sat here a whole week asking me questions."

"But I don't want to put you to a lot of trouble," said Bartlett.

"Trouble!" The great man laughed. "There's no trouble about it. I've got a house that's like a hotel. I mean a big house with lots of servants. But anyway I'm always glad to do anything I can for a writing man, especially a man that works for Ralph Doane. I'm very fond of Ralph. I mean I like him personally besides being a great editor. I mean I've known him for years and when there's anything I can do for him, I'm glad to do it. I mean it'll be a pleasure to have you. So if you want to notify your family——"

"I haven't any family," said Bartlett.

"Well, I'm sorry for you! And I bet when you see mine, you'll wish you had one of your own. But I'm glad you can come and we'll start now so as to get there before the kiddies are put away for the night. I mean I want you to be sure and see the kiddies. I've got three."

"I've seen their pictures," said Bartlett. "You must be very proud of them. They're all girls, aren't they?"

"Yes, sir; three girls. I wouldn't have a boy. I mean I always wanted girls. I mean girls have got a lot more zip to them. I mean they're a lot zippier. But let's go! The Rolls is downstairs and if we start now we'll get there before dark. I mean I want you to see the place while it's still daylight."

The great man—Lou Gregg, president of Modern Pictures, Inc.—escorted his visitor from the magnificent office by a private door and down a private stairway to the avenue, where the glittering car with its glittering chauffeur waited.

"My wife was in town today," said Gregg as they glided northward, "and I hoped we could ride out together, but she called up about two and asked would I mind if she went on home in the Pierce. She was through with her shopping and she hates to be away from the house and the kiddies any longer than she can help. Celia's a great home girl. You'd never know she was the same girl now as the girl I married seven years ago. I mean she's different. I mean she's not the same. I mean her marriage and being a mother has developed her. Did you ever see her? I mean in pictures?"

"I think I did once," replied Bartlett. "Didn't she play the young sister in 'The Cad'?"

"Yes, with Harold Hodgson and Marie Blythe."

"I thought I'd seen her. I remember her as very pretty and vivacious."

"She certainly was! And she is yet! I mean she's even prettier, but of course she ain't a kid, though she looks it. I mean she was only seventeen in that picture and that was ten years ago. I mean she's twenty-seven years old now. But I never met a girl with as much zip as she had in those days. It's remarkable how marriage changes them. I mean nobody would ever thought Celia Sayles would turn out to be a sit-by-the-fire. I mean she still likes a good time, but her home and kiddies come first. I mean her home and kiddies come first."

"I see what you mean," said Bartlett.

An hour's drive brought them to Ardsley-on-Hudson and the great man's home.

"A wonderful place!" Bartlett exclaimed with a heroic semblance of enthusiasm as the car turned in at an *arc de triomphe* of a gateway and approached a white house that might have been mistaken for the Yale Bowl.

"It ought to be!" said Gregg. "I mean I've spent enough on it. I mean these things cost money."

He indicated with a gesture the huge house and Urbanesque landscaping.

"But no amount of money is too much to spend on home. I mean it's a good investment if it tends to make your family proud and satisfied with their home. I mean every nickel I've spent here is like so much insurance; it insures me of a happy wife and family. And what more can a man ask?"

Bartlett didn't know, but the topic was forgotten in the business of leaving the resplendent Rolls and entering the even more resplendent reception hall.

"Forbes will take your things," said Gregg. "And, Forbes, you may tell Dennis that Mr. Bartlett will spend the night." He faced the wide stairway and raised his voice. "Sweetheart!" he called.

FROM above came the reply in contralto: "Hello, sweetheart!" "Come down, sweetheart. I've brought you a visitor."

"All right, sweetheart, in just a minute."

Gregg led Bartlett into a living-room that was five laps to the mile and suggestive of an Atlantic City auction sale.

"Sit there," said the host, pointing to a balloon-stuffed easy chair, "and I'll see if we can get a drink. I've got some real old Bourbon that I'd like you to try. You know I come from Chicago and I always liked Bourbon better than Scotch. I mean I always preferred it to Scotch. Forbes," he addressed the servant, "we want a drink. You'll find a full bottle of that Bourbon in the cupboard."

"It's only half full, sir," said Forbes.

"Half full! That's funny! I mean I opened it last night and just took one drink. I mean it ought to be full."

"It's only half full," repeated Forbes, and went to fetch it.

"I'll have to investigate," Gregg told his guest. "I mean this ain't the first time lately that some of my good stuff has disappeared. When you keep so many servants, it's hard to get all honest ones. But here's Celia!"

Bartlett rose to greet the striking brunette who at this moment made an entrance so Delsarte as to be almost painful.

With never a glance at him, she minced across the room to her husband and took a half interest in a convincing kiss.

"Well, sweetheart," she said when it was at last over.

"This is Mr. Bartlett, sweetheart," said her husband. "Mr. Bartlett, meet Mrs. Gregg."

Bartlett shook his hostess's proffered two fingers.

"I'm so pleased!" said Celia in a voice reminiscent of Miss Claire's imitation of Miss Barrymore.

"Mr. Bartlett," Gregg went on, "is with Mankind, Ralph Doane's magazine. He is going to write me up; I mean us."

"No, you mean you," said Celia. "I'm sure the public is not interested in great men's wives."

"I am sure you are mistaken, Mrs. Gregg," said Bartlett politely. "In this case at least. You are worth writing up aside from being a great man's wife."

"I'm afraid you're a flatterer, Mr. Bartlett," she returned. "I have been out of the limelight so long that I doubt if anybody

remembers me. I'm no longer an artist; merely a happy wife and mother."

"And I claim, sweetheart," said Gregg, "that it takes an artist to be that."

"Oh, no, sweetheart!" said Celia. "Not when they have you for a husband!"

The exchange of hosannahs was interrupted by the arrival of Forbes with the tray.

"Will you take yours straight or in a high-ball?" Gregg inquired of his guest. "Personally I like good whisky straight. I mean mixing it with water spoils the flavor. I mean whisky like this, it seems like a crime to mix it with water."

"I'll have mine straight," said Bartlett, who would have preferred a high-ball.

WHILE the drinks were being prepared, he observed his hostess more closely and thought how much more charming she would be if she had used finesse in improving on nature. Her cheeks, her mouth, her eyes and lashes had been, he guessed, far above the average in beauty before she had begun experimenting with them. And her experiments had been clumsy. She was handsome in spite of her efforts to be handsomer.

"Listen, sweetheart," said her husband. "One of the servants has been helping himself to this Bourbon. I mean it was a full bottle last night and I only had one little drink out of it. And now it's less than half full. Who do you suppose has been at it?"

"How do I know, sweetheart? Maybe the groceryman or the iceman or somebody."

"But you and I and Forbes are the only ones that have a key. I mean it was locked up."

"Maybe you forgot to lock it."

"I never do. Well, anyway, Bartlett, here's a go!"

"Doesn't Mrs. Gregg indulge?" asked Bartlett.

"Only a cocktail before dinner," said Celia. "Lou objects to me drinking whisky, and I don't like it much anyway."

"I don't object to you drinking whisky, sweetheart. I just object to you drinking to excess. I mean I think it coarsens a woman to drink. I mean it makes them coarse."

"Well, there's no argument, sweetheart. As I say, I don't care whether I have it or not."

"It certainly is great Bourbon!" said Bartlett, smacking his lips and putting his glass back on the tray.

"You bet it is!" Gregg agreed. "I mean you can't buy that kind of stuff any more. I mean it's real stuff. You help yourself when you want another. Mr. Bartlett is going to stay all night, sweetheart. I told him he could get a whole lot more of a line on us that way than just interviewing me in the office. I mean I'm tongue-tied when it comes to talking about my work and my success. I mean it's better to see me out here as I am, in my home, with my family. I mean my home life speaks for itself without me saying a word."

"But, sweetheart," said his wife, "what about Mr. Latham?"

"Gosh! I forgot all about him! I must phone and see if I can call it off. That's terrible! You see," he explained to Bartlett, "I made a date to go up to Tarrytown tonight, to K. L. Latham's, the sugar people. We're going to talk over the new club. We're going to have a golf club that will make the rest of them look like a toy. I mean a real golf club! They want me to kind of run it. And I was to go up there tonight and talk it over. I'll phone and see if I can postpone it."

"Oh, don't postpone it on my account!" urged Bartlett. "I can come out again some other time, or I can see you in town."

"I don't see how you *can* postpone it, sweetheart," said Celia. "Didn't he say old Mr. King was coming over from White Plains? They'll be mad at you if you don't go."

"I'm afraid they would resent it, sweetheart. Well, I'll tell you. You can entertain Mr. Bartlett and I'll go up there right after dinner and come back as soon as I can. And Bartlett and I can talk when I get back. I mean we can talk when I get back. How is that?"

"That suits me," said Bartlett.

"I'll be as entertaining as I can," said Celia, "but I'm afraid that isn't very entertaining. However, if I'm too much of a bore, there's plenty to read."

"No danger of my being bored," said Bartlett.

"Well, that's all fixed then," said the relieved host. "I hope you'll excuse me running away. But I don't see how I can get out of it. I mean with old King coming over from White Plains. I mean he's an old man. But listen, sweetheart—where are the kiddies? Mr. Bartlett wants to see them."

"Yes, indeed!" agreed the visitor.

"Of course you'd say so!" Celia said. "But we *are* proud of them! I suppose all parents are the same. They all think their own children are the only children in the world. Isn't that so, Mr. Bartlett? Or haven't you any children?"

"I'm sorry to say I'm not married."

"Oh, you poor thing! We pity him, don't we, sweetheart? But why aren't you, Mr. Bartlett? Don't tell me you're a woman hater!"

"Not now, anyway," said the gallant Bartlett.

"Do you get that, sweetheart? He's paying you a pretty compliment."

"I heard it, sweetheart. And now I'm sure he's a flatterer. But I must hurry and get the children before Hortense puts them to bed."

"Well," said Gregg when his wife had left the room, "would you say she's changed?"

"A little, and for the better. She's more than fulfilled her early promise."

"I think so," said Gregg. "I mean I think she was a beautiful girl and now she's an even more beautiful woman. I mean wifehood and maternity have given her a kind of a—well, you know—I mean a kind of a pose. I mean a pose. How about another drink?"

They were emptying their glasses when Celia returned with two of her little girls.

"The baby's in bed and I was afraid to ask Hortense to get her up again. But you'll see her in the morning. This is Norma and this is Grace. Girls, this is Mr. Bartlett."

The girls received this news calmly.

"Well, girls," said Bartlett.

"What do you think of them, Bartlett?" demanded their father. "I mean what do you think of them?"

"They're great!" replied the guest with creditable warmth.

"I mean aren't they pretty?"

"I should say they are!"

"There, girls! Why don't you thank Mr. Bartlett?"

"Thanks," murmured Norma.

"How old are you, Norma?" asked Bartlett.

"Six," said Norma.

"Well," said Bartlett. "And how old is Grace?"

"Four," replied Norma.

"Well," said Bartlett. "And how old is baby sister?"

"One and a half," answered Norma.

"Well," said Bartlett.

AS THIS seemed to be final, "Come, girls," said their mother. "Kiss daddy good night and I'll take you back to Hortense."

"I'll take them," said Gregg. "I'm going up-stairs anyway. And you can show Bartlett around. I mean before it gets any darker."

"Good night, girls," said Bartlett, and the children murmured a good night.

"I'll come and see you before you're asleep," Celia told them. And after Gregg had led them out, "Do you really think they're pretty?" she asked Bartlett.

"I certainly do. Especially Norma. She's the image of you," said Bartlett.

"She looks a little like I used to," Celia admitted. "But I hope she doesn't look like me now. I'm too old looking."

"You look remarkably young!" said Bartlett. "No one would believe you were the mother of three children."

"Oh, Mr. Bartlett! But I mustn't forget I'm to 'show you around.' Lou is so proud of our home!"

"And with reason," said Bartlett.

"It is wonderful! I call it our love nest. Quite a big nest, don't you think? Mother says it's too big to be cozy; she says she can't think of it as a home. But I always say a place is whatever one makes of it. A woman can be happy in a tent if they love each other. And miserable in a royal palace without love. Don't you think so, Mr. Bartlett?"

"Yes, indeed."

"Is this really such wonderful Bourbon? I think I'll just take a sip of it and see what it's like. It can't hurt me if it's so good. Do you think so, Mr. Bartlett?"

"I don't believe so."

"Well then, I'm going to taste it and if it hurts me it's your fault."

Celia poured a whisky glass two-thirds full and drained it at a gulp.

"It is good, isn't it?" she said. "Of course I'm not much of a judge as I don't care for whisky and Lou won't let me drink it."



C "He wanted a beautiful wife and beautiful children for his beautiful home," said Mrs. Gregg. "Just to show off. See, Barker?"

But he's raved so about this Bourbon that I did want to see what it was like. You won't tell on me, will you, Mr. Bartlett?"

"Not I!"

"I wonder how it would be in a high-ball. Let's you and I have just one. But I'm forgetting I'm supposed to show you the place. We won't have time to drink a high-ball and see the place too before Lou comes down. Are you so crazy to see the place?"

"Not very."

"Well, then, what do you say if we have a high-ball? And it'll be a secret between you and I."

They drank in silence and Celia pressed a button by the door. "You may take the bottle and tray," she told Forbes. "And now," she said to Bartlett, "we'll go out on the porch and see as much as we can see. You'll have to guess the rest."

Gregg, having changed his shirt and collar, joined them.

"Well," he said to Bartlett, "have you seen everything?"

"I guess I have, Mr. Gregg," lied the (Continued on page 194)

The Snake Charmer

*Who Was the
Most Amazing
Person I Met
in the Orient*

By WILLIAM
JOHNSTON

WHERE anything that smacks of the supernatural is concerned, I am frankly skeptical. I wish to make that point entirely clear before recording here a most unusual experience that recently was mine in a little village in mysterious Africa. I do not think I can be easily imposed upon, for at various times in life I have traveled widely in some twenty-five foreign lands, seeing strange sights, meeting strange people and witnessing curious spectacles.

Moreover, where things occult or psychical are concerned, I have always refused to accept conclusions without definite proof. I have, for example, taken the time and trouble to investigate scores of so-called haunted houses without ever having seen or heard anything of a ghost. I have attended almost countless séances. Yet I am still unconvinced that spirits exist or that they can return to earth.

Besides, I know a lot about magic. I am fortunate in enjoying an intimate acquaintance with the most celebrated of the modern magicians. The world-famous Houdini and I have spent many an hour together over the luncheon table and in his famous library where he has gathered practically everything written in the last five centuries about magic, discussing the methods



I am sure Moussa could not have concealed the snake there beforehand.



Moussa Mohammed, with some of his deadly captives.

by which masters of legerdemain deceive their audiences. I have spent week-ends at his country place with the clever Howard Thurston. Khaldah, the fascinating Egyptian sorcerer, in intimate chats has revealed to me many of the processes by which Oriental wizards seemingly are able to tell your name, read your mind or decipher what you have written without apparently having seen it beforehand.

So much by way of preamble to demonstrate that I ought not to be easy to fool or mystify. And now I am going to set down in detail, as truthfully and as accurately as lies within my power, the facts about the almost incredible spectacle I recently witnessed—the most mystifying experience that ever has fallen to my lot.

Early in the month of March, 1925, my wife and I were in the little village of Luxor in Egypt. We had made the night's train ride from Cairo to visit the ancient temples of Luxor and Karnak. In the wonderful Winter Palace Hotel, overlooking the Nile, we lingered for several days, fascinated by the ancient ruins. Late one afternoon we had driven out some little distance from the village to

see some camel races. As we were heading homeward, our dragoman, perched beside the driver, pointed with excitement to a tall figure striding majestically along the road just ahead of us.

"There is Moussa," he called out excitedly. "Who is Moussa?" I asked curiously.

He explained in his voluble broken English

that it was Moussa Mohammed, who had inherited from his father, his grandfather and countless preceding ancestors a peculiar power over snakes and all manner of reptiles. From the days of Solomon they had preserved in their family the words of a charm that made snakes and all other reptiles obey them and come to them when they called. He also explained that Moussa would go with you to any place you might select and call snakes into his presence and that no snake or scorpion could ever poison him.

Halting the carriage as we caught up with Moussa, I arranged with him, through the dragoman—for Moussa, save for two or three phrases, speaks nothing but Arabic—to come to the hotel at two o'clock the next afternoon, to conduct us on a snake-finding tour.

WITH the idea of supplying reputable witnesses to corroborate the testimony as to what occurred, I made up a party of Americans and Englishmen. Promptly at two o'clock the next afternoon Moussa appeared on the hotel terrace. He is a sun-bronzed Arab, presumably about forty, and above the average height of his people, standing erectly, a man of six feet. He wore the accustomed native dress, a floating black cloak with wide sleeves, and his head was wrapped in a white turban. In one hand he carried a stick of bamboo about four feet long and in the other a bottle-shaped closely-woven wicker basket, in which, he explained, through the dragoman, he would put the snakes when he caught them.

After some consultation among ourselves we decided to drive out to a place about two miles away at the ruins of the temple of Karnak, where a tumble-down wall ran for perhaps half a mile along the old temple site. As we got out of our carriages at the chosen place, Moussa gave his wicker basket to a native boy to hold. At the suggestion of one of the men in the party that he might have some snakes concealed in his voluminous robes, he stripped off his cloak and turban, revealing himself in a single tight-fitting white undergarment, and permitted the men in the party to examine both himself and his discarded clothing for concealed snakes.

The examination over, Moussa resumed his cloak and turban, and with the stick he carried pointing to the ground, began a slow march, reciting in Arabic a strange monotonous chant, the spectators and the boy with the basket trailing discreetly along behind him perhaps twenty feet away. My dragoman gave me a free translation of the words as the ceremony proceeded.

"He is calling," the dragoman whispered, "on Moses, Solomon, Jesus and Mohammed to help him find the snakes. He is asking the holy saint of his belief, Sheik Ahmed El Rifai, to bid the snakes to come to him."

Suddenly Moussa paused in his walk and his chant. "No smellum snake," he announced. "Smellum scorpion."

As he spoke he pointed his rod at a small stone, and stooping, turned it over. Sure enough, there lay a scorpion about three inches long. Calmly he picked it up and exhibited it. Viciously

the venomous little creature struck again and again at his restraining fingers, but he gave no heed to its bites and after holding it for perhaps three minutes, called the native boy to him and dropped it into the wicker basket.

"No snakes here," he announced, and stood waiting while we debated among ourselves where to make the next trial. We decided on a place about three hundred yards farther along the wall. As we reached the spot, Moussa resumed his chant and his march with his wand pointing toward the ground. Presently his features lighted up and he began intoning his chant more vigorously.

"Snake here," he announced, advancing rapidly toward the wall. All of us, spurred on by excitement, crowded closer on his heels. At the wall he stopped stock still with his rod pointing at a small crevice in the lichen-covered stones. If he had secreted a snake there, as some one suggested as a possibility, it must have been done the day before, for I noted that during the night a spider had spun its web across the opening. And remember, it was we, not he, who had picked the place.

Vigorously Moussa recited his chant. Presently, perhaps in a minute, a snake's head slowly emerged from the opening. It was a wicked-looking sight, that head, with the forked tongue darting from its open mouth. Calmly Moussa reached forward and seizing the reptile by the neck drew it out, a writhing, poisonous six-foot cobra, one of the deadliest and most dreaded of reptiles. Seemingly unmindful of its poison-fangs, he held it up while several of the party snapped their cameras at him.

Still holding the cobra, he crossed to a little clearing and tossed the snake to the ground a few feet away from him. It headed at once for the undergrowth, but instantly he began his chant again; and then came the strangest part of the spectacle.

At the sound of his voice the cobra's flight abruptly stopped. Slowly, unwillingly, as if compelled by some power it could not resist, the snake writhed about in its own length and lifting its head, turned to look at Moussa. Its neck swelled out, giving it the graceful lines in which you see cobras depicted on the old

Egyptian monuments. For a few seconds it faced Moussa as if doing its utmost to defy him, and all the while the monotonous chant went on. Presently the cobra's graceful head was lowered and as we watched, breathless with excitement at the strange spectacle, it crawled reluctantly and slowly toward Moussa. As it came to him he lowered one hand and held it waiting for the snake's approach. Incredible as it seems, we with our own eyes saw the conquered reptile crawl slowly up to that outstretched hand and lay its head there. Entirely under subjection to Moussa, it made no effort at resistance as he picked it up and poked it through the small opening in the top of his wicker basket.

"He keeps them in the basket until they die," my dragoman explained. "It is against his religion to kill them. When they die he takes them out into the fields and buries them."

That same afternoon we tested Moussa's powers in two other places—at a section of the old wall perhaps a hundred yards farther along, where he found another (Continued on page 221)



Reciting his strange chant, Moussa drew out a six-foot cobra.

By
RUPERT
HUGHES

A
Story of a
Girl who
did what she
WANTED

A Daughter *of* Today

IN PERHAPS a hundred thousand American homes an anxious father and mother sat watching a clock and wondering, "Where is my wandering girl tonight?"

That was certainly the theme of Mr. and Mrs. Macready's bitter musings.

In perhaps a hundred thousand bosky dells in the land the wandering girl had ceased wandering and was ensconced in a motor-car alongside a young man, experimenting solemnly with the most dangerous of explosives, love—one of those curious dynamites which under certain conditions may be pounded, thrown about or trusted to blaze quietly and cozily in a fireplace; yet at the detonation of a certain special fulminate may blow up and tear everything within reach to atoms—or worse, to electrons.

This was certainly the case with Miss Varue Macready of Perrytown and the young man Hilary Welch whom she chanced to be collaborating with this evening.

Mr. Welch had selected this bosky dell from a proved knowledge of it as the most seclusive and boskiest in the neighborhood.

His very car, like an old horse, seemed to know the place, for it turned aside from the road and came to a stop at the densest shadow with a gentleness that justified Varue's question:

"Out of gas?"

"Oomp-oom!" was Hilary's Zulu-like negative.

"Ignition trouble?"

"I should say not! My ignition is perfect!"

Varue pretended to miss this play on fire. "Lost the way?"

"On the contrary, I hope I've found it."

Varue laughed with sophistication.

"Well, anyhow, it's a relief not to hear the usual alibis."

"We understand each other perfectly," Hilary chuckled, "and that's another relief."

He slid his arm along behind her back and with graceful prehensility drew her shoulders into the niche of his bosom. She made no outcry, did not shudder or babble "Please don't!" Yet when his lips arrived in front of hers, murmured with a blighting indifference: "Just as much obliged, old dear, but I'm not in a petting mood tonight."

It was Hilary that shivered and stammered "Please don't!" finding the policy of non-resistance more dampening than either compliance or displacency.

When Varue shook her head with a yawn of quasi-boredom, he could have roared. Baffled, he offered her his Egyptians in a silver case. She shook her head with disgust. He gasped:

"You're not such a prude as all that?"

She smiled indulgently, took from her pocket a little canvas bag and booklet of rice papers, tilted tobacco into the folded paper, rolled it up with a scholarly left hand, secured it with a deft passage across the tip of her tongue and shared the match he held in the cup of his palm.

He found her so beautiful in the ruddy flare that he burned his eyes as well as his fingers.

After a puff or two of pleasantly contemptuous smoke he dragged from his hip pocket a form-fitting silver flask.

"This may warm you up a bit."



Illustrations by
Charles D. Mitchell



Varue was driven to asking Malcolm Stone, disabled in the war, to be her guest at the tournament.

She shook her head again. "None for me—and none for you. I've had one or two experiences with tipsy drivers; and of all the ways of squandering a fair young life, that's the foolishhest."

When he laughed and lifted the flask to his own lips for a nip she pushed it from him. When he turned his back on her she put her arms about him and twisted the flask from his fingers. In the struggle a good libation was sprinkled on her frock. The rest of it she poured on the ground, for in spite of his wrestling clutches she held it far out and emptied it.

He was in a fury. He could have slapped her out of the car, but women had not yet reached the point of equality where a man could pay them the compliment of a challenging smash in the jaw, and the good old days of knighthood were gone in which a gentleman could knock a senseless lady more so.

Varue saw that Hilary was tempted to beat her and being a well-muscled product of basketball and gymnasium contests she was quite ready to surprise him with a few new tricks in the

womanly art of self-defense. But he conquered himself, though he sat breathing as hard as if he had finished a gruelling bout. Seeing that he was in no more mood for amorous dalliance than she was, she said: "That seems to conclude this portion of the entertainment. How about a little home, sweet home?"

He nodded and set the gears in mesh with a sound of gnashing teeth and the bosky dell lost its clients.

In the meanwhile the elder Macreadys cowered in misery, pitifully imagining their daughter in the throes of surrender to the basest temptations of an irresistible man.

John Macready was suffering the exceeding anguish of a man who believes evil of the daughter he has raised with innocence as his dearest ideal. He clenched his fists and groaned: "The automobile is the curse of the world. It is the devil's own. It is destroying all decency."

Jane Macready clung to him and pleaded, more for his sake than her daughter's: "But, poppa, you mustn't think the worst.

When we were young, we had dark porches and hammocks. Don't you remember how we used to make love in the dark? Varue is a good girl."

"A good girl!" he howled. "And she sits out alone in the dark for hours with some beast miles and miles from home."

His black fancies suggested to him everything but the truth.

AFTER a mile or two of sullen jogging Hilary set his foot on the accelerator and watched the speedometer swing past the thirty to the forty and on past the fifty-five.

Varue was not afraid and she revelled in an ecstasy of velocity such as only birds had hitherto enjoyed.

This did not suit the purposes of Hilary and he thought to throw a little scare into her by guiding the car on a scallopy path and pretending to be as drunk as she had forbidden him to be. He succeeded in throwing the horses of one farmer into the posture of unicorns rampant as he swirled round the wagon, but he merely offended Varue. She said:

"Come back to earth, dearie. You haven't the excuse of gin."

Whereupon he gave the car a little more gas and the speedometer rolled past sixty a moment; then ran back to zero. She had put out her toe and kicked off the power switch.

He kicked it on again and shielded it from her foot with his own. He guided the wheel with his left hand and thrust his right out about her shoulder, crushed her to him and kissed her full and fair on the mouth and held her lips against his till her fist came up in a jab under the chin that sent his head back and jarred his wheel-hand so that the car ran off the road and down an embankment.

Death was close at hand, but the earth was so soft that the wheels ground in and came to a slow stop. The car, however, was tilted so far to the side that Varue was tossed out on the grass and went rolling down the hill. And Hilary came tumbling after.

When he scrambled to his feet and tried to pick her up she resented this remnant of ancient condescension, knocked his hands aside and rising, struck out for home.

He limped after her apologizing humbly; but she warned him in a calm low voice:

"I don't mind the accident; but if you ever try to kiss me again like that—well, it will be one more job for the dentist—or the undertaker."

He hobbled alongside her all the long way home, pouring out prayers for forgiveness with an increasing reverence. When they reached her gate she laughed and said:

"Forget it, Hilary; and so will I."

But she resolved to forget him as well as his assault on her proud lips. She had weighed him in her set of balances and found him wanting—in just what, she could not tell. But he had not provided the thrill she was looking for; and he was no longer worth a further experiment.

She went into the house feeling that the world was a lonely and a stupid place peopled with men of little importance and women of none.

The clock meant nothing to her and she saw no more impropriety in setting her latch-key in the lock at an early morning hour than her elder brother felt.

But her father was of the older generation when time was of the essence of women's contract with respectability. His wife clung to him and pleaded:

"Don't be too harsh with her. She's young."

"If I didn't love her I wouldn't care," he sighed, "but I've got to break her to save her."

When Varue found herself confronted with his mask of horror and his inarticulate accusations, the irony of the situation nauseated her. She was too tired to fight or to explain. She was so tired that she stumbled a little as she tried to pass her father. He caught a whiff of the liquor she had sprinkled on her dress in wrestling the flask from its owner, and he cried:

"My Lord, she's been drinking! She's drunk!"

He caught her by the shoulder with one hand and raised the other for a curse or a blow. Before either could fall, Varue pushed his hand away and started to explain. He shouted: "Don't try to lie out of it. I wouldn't believe anything you said."

This brought a jaded laugh from Varue: "That saves me a lot of talk."

As she made to pass him he clutched her and swung her round. She ripped her hands from her with a blazing ferocity.

"Keep your hands off me! I won't stand that from anybody!"

Trembling with ire before her defiance, her father sneered: "You didn't mind the hands of your young lounge-lizard."

Varue narrowed her eyes, hesitated a moment, then waived all defense: "Have it your own way. You know everything."

There was something in her insolence that shook his suspicion more than any baby-eyed protestation of innocence could have done. He dropped his hands in a paralysis of irresolution and let her go on up-stairs.

When he left for his store the next morning she was still asleep.

The afternoon papers carried head-lines that put a stop for a time to the Perrytown motor-car petting parties. A fiend accomplished temporarily what none of the good people had been able to do. He scared the young couples off the roads.

The gossips, the moralists, mothers who were jealous for their daughters' sakes, mothers who were afraid of becoming her mother-in-law, and rival girls (who should have known better) called Varue Macready a bad one at worst or at best a flirt, a spooner, a petter, a necker.

Even the young men of the town labeled her a teaser, a cheater, a capper for the gasoline dealers and a dealer in false hopes.

But she was the most earnest of young women, taking life with exceeding seriousness and determined that she would try as many men as she could decoy into her laboratory. When she found the one that stood the test and caused the supreme reaction in her heart she would accept him as her mate for life—or as long at least as he continued to live up to his promises.

Without realizing how great she was, without realizing perhaps just what she was after, she was devoting her perfect body and her perfect instincts to the highest development of her posterity. She was doing her bit for evolution with the blind sincerity of the birds, the fish, the quadrupeds and all the other manifestations of life in which the female chooses her mate after putting many males through their paces.

She frightened her parents and horrified her neighbors by performing her experiments in a solitude shared by only one young man at a time.

When her father and mother had insisted on sitting in the living-room with the slide doors open into the parlor, she led the young man of the evening outdoors, saying that it was cooler on the porch, although she knew it would be much warmer on the porch.

When her father had put an electric light on the porch and kept it aglow, she suggested to her caller that it would be nice exercise to take a little stroll. It was grand exercise.

When the idiotic city fathers had yielded to the insanity of reformers who said that there was too much spooning in Lovers' Lane and cut down the double row of trees that made Badeau Street a lane for lovers, Varue led her callers to the park.

IN EVERY TOWN there is a busy body of imbecilic busybodies who drive lovers to despair by trying to make spooning impossible. They are the true advocates of race suicide, for they make it more and more difficult for young people to learn how to love and to fall deeply enough in love to take up the appalling responsibilities of marriage.

But love will find the way. And just when it seemed as if the omnipresence of electric lights and the disappearance of shade trees and front porches were about to drive young love out of business in America, Cupid inspired somebody to invent the automobile and to make it so cheap that every young man could afford to make the first payment on one, and so easy to run that every young girl could steer one.

As soon as Varue was old enough to secure an operator's license, she wheedled a car out of her father on the excuse that she could run him down to his office of mornings and call and get him of evenings; and also do the marketing. She did all these things—especially her own marketing. Her own markets did not open till after dark.

Now parents, gossips, scandal-mongers, old maids and all other enemies of love for one reason or another, hate dark and distance, both of which are the favorite and indeed the necessary conditions of love.

The Perrytown gossips went almost out of their wits and quite out of their vocabularies when they saw Varue's well-known runabout scotching toward the open country. They called her car the gadabout.

Mr. and Mrs. Macready were ghastly afraid of many things, but the thing they spoke of was the danger she ran. Assuming—for argument's sake—that she would resist any and all advances, supposing that some of the young men—

"Nonsense!" laughed Varue, "any girl can take care of herself anywhere with any young man—provided she wants to—really wants to—unless the man is a drunken beast or a maniac. I'm



C"Have it your own way. You know everything," said Varue.
There was something in her insolence that shook her father's suspicions.

as strong as any man I know. I can squirm and I've got a fist, and I know a trick or two that would make any sane man lose all interest in me right away."

This held the parents mute for a while though it did not quell their alarms in the least. The climax was reached in this excursion with Hilary Welch, ending in a return with a whisky aroma and a mood of open defiance.

And then the maniac appeared.

In Perrytown as in many other, perhaps in all other communities, there was a sudden panic of tragic terror caused by the visitation of a mysterious elusive fiend who wreaked a frightful, irrevocable crime upon trapped lovers.

The moralists never took the blame for it. They never take the blame for anything. They made a horrid scandal of the roadside petting parties, though nothing worse—and nothing better—could have occurred in the (Continued on page 162)

I am no Hero to My

By ARTHUR

MANY people seem shocked when they hear my sons address me in terms of derision. This, their expressions plainly indicate, is not the way to bring up children. And I would feel very badly about it if I didn't know that all people disapprove of the way other peoples' children are brought up. It seems impossible to please everyone. So, then, why not please oneself? I've tried to, and had a most wonderful fatherhood in being perfectly selfish, in treating my children as I've seen fit, not as other people would have seen fit.

Have I been right, or have I been wrong? Well, time will tell; and until it does tell me, I'll have enjoyed my boys. Can every father say as much?

I have been president, king and emperor; King Arthur and Huckleberry Finn; Robin Hood and Napoleon; a troubadour chanting brave songs of a hero who was myself; as Jack the Giant-killer I have won applause; demoniac magician at one moment, in the next I have become the handsome prince who slew the demon.

And now I abdicate my glories. I, the hero of a hundred twilight hours, have doffed my armor, my invisible cloak, my hat with wings, my keen sword, my trusty bow, and have put on the prosaic knickers of the dub golfer. But, folks, for a while I was the embodiment of all that was heroic, all that was glorious, all that was god-like. I had my few years and I'm content to resume humanity once again. Just a hum-drum old dodo, full of alarms and excursions, slightly fat-witted—but not too unamiable, I pray—I'm father, no longer a dad.

For Clyde is six and Jeff is nine. Their eyes are opening. My chauffeur can climb a rope hand over hand and I can't. They have been to the circus and seen the strong men; they've read about Dempsey and the great Babe. A boy of fourteen who occasionally condescends to them can swim faster and farther than I; indubitably some of our neighbors ride in more expensive cars; the newspapers—Jeff reads—are filled with accounts of other people. I'm not important any more.

It began like this:

"Would you rather have red hair or black?" somebody asked Jeff one day.

"I want to be bald, like daddy," he replied.

His eyes were fixed on me; in them I read a hero-worship that thrilled me. I began living up to the ideal he and Clyde had of me. As Homer never sang I sang of myself. I made myself the hero of every bit of history I could remember, and many that I invented.

It went over—big. Until doubt crept in. A surreptitious smile on the mouth of a visitor; a scoffing word from some boy companion . . . the god disappeared; the human being took his

place. And now what about it? Fiction having been replaced by fact, my children having become aware that I'm an ordinary mortal, no longer reverencing and adoring me, what am I going to do?

Nothing. I head no counter-revolutions; I hire no propagandists. I step down and out, with what grace I may assume. They have stepped from babyhood into the swaggering consciousness of boyhood, and I shall lead no lost cause.

I had the wittiest, gentlest dad that ever breathed. But he had great dignity, and that dignity became a barrier between us. I loved and admired him; but I did not understand him, nor did he understand me. And in his heart I think he thought it more important that I should understand him than that he should understand me.

But I feel that it is unnecessary that my children should understand their father; it is vital that their father should understand his children. And that understanding may only be attempted—it may never be really encompassed—by a journey back into my own childhood.

What does a child think of adults?

He thinks that they are unreasonable, selfish and Lord! how wilful. Adults want their own way; always, interminably, and without justice. Adults have no sense of values. They rate high the little things and scorn the matters of importance. And how endlessly they talk, and of what trifles are their weighty conversations composed!

What dreadful bores are adults! Are adults content to state a case and leave it?

Never. They repeat, they sord, they admonish, they warn. Adults are filled with fears. Because an adult cannot climb a tree, he orders his child to remain upon the safe ground. Adventure dead within their petrified souls, they shiver at adventure of the vicarious sort.

LAST week, their governess being away and their mother finding it necessary to go shopping, Clyde and Jeff were left alone.

That adventure spirit, which we adults always try to stifle, flamed in their breasts. They went to the garage and, with the aid of a friendly hose, began playing firemen. They drenched the garage and themselves; they broke a few instruments prized by the chauffeur.

"Mr. Roche," said Phil the chauffeur later that day, "your radio battery was being charged while Clyde and Jeff was hitting it up. If they'd turned the hose on the charger, the electric current woulda gone along the stream and it woulda knocked 'em cold."

"Oh, my heavens!" I cried.

I went to the bedroom in which they were confined. "Do you young hellions know what might have happened while



G. To Clyde and Jeff, I'm "father"—no longer a dad.

SOMERS ROCHE

Sons—Thank Goodness!

you were raising Cain?" I demanded. I explained the dangers to which they had been subjected, and left them. I, male parent, took charge of this crime.

"Let 'em stay in their room a long time," I ordered. And I went for a ride.

Twenty minutes later I returned. I spoke to their mother. "Mighty hot up-stairs; no use ruining the boys' health just to punish them. I think I'll let them out."

My wife smiled wisely. I went up-stairs.

"Well, boys, you've been punished enough," I announced as I entered the room. "You may go outdoors, now."

"We don't want to," objected the youngest.

"Why not?" I asked.

"We're playing 'hellions,'" said Jeff.

I'd tried to punish them; weak, I'd forgiven. Net result: I'd taught them a swear word.

And they were right to ignore my attempt at punishment. After all, they'd done nothing very serious, and they knew it. The fact that their lives had been endangered by the electric current was immaterial. They were alive, weren't they? Then why did I beef around and bawl them out?

You see, adults never know when an incident is closed.

And worst of all, untaught by experience, making the same mistakes over and over again, they presume to offer advice.

They insist upon discipline, although they themselves lack it completely. I exaggerate? Look into your own soul and see if you are disciplined. See if the same errors of thirty years ago are not being made today.

Adults are unpleasant. Of course, my curling-lipped reader, this doesn't mean you. You understand your children, and they love you. But the next time you enter a room where your children are, notice how their conversation ceases; observe how self-conscious they become. Not, perhaps, if your children are by themselves, but if the neighbor's children are present. Because you're an alien, of another world, of different faith, of different customs, of a different age.

It is a banality to say that one wishes liking from one's children, and does not care about their respect. And yet it is a banality worth repetition.

How does one go about acquiring the respect of others? People tell me that their children respect them, and I hide a laugh. I don't respect these people, and I'm quite certain that the keen eyes of childhood penetrate more deeply into sham than my own.

You can't deceive your children: They know. They know when you are sincere in denying them a pleasure, and when your plea is a specious covering of your own selfishness. Your little-nesses are known to them and yet you crave respect.

What is this mania for the respect of others, anyway?

Do you respect yourself, and if so—why? Do you ever examine into your own virtues and discover of what grimy material they are composed?

Let us take this thing called "respect" apart and see what makes it tick.

SHALL my children respect me because of my achievements in this world? But when I sum up these achievements, how little they become, how un-epochal they somehow contrive to appear.

My virtues become the accidents of a momentary mood.

A thousand meannesses stand out, along the road of forty years, and, oh, my children! these are not the things for which I crave respect.

Respect, then, becomes the gratification of an unworthy vanity. I want respect for qualities I do not possess, or that, if I possess them, are but the ordinary decencies without which I should be less than human.

Away with respect, then; it is an unworthy banner under which to wage my campaign for—what? There's the question. What do I want from my children?

I want their love, let us say. But love is never purchased; love is given, and given freely or not at all. I cannot make them love me, any more than I can make them respect me.

I want their duty performed toward me, let us say. But will a kindly Providence inform me what, exactly, is the duty of a child toward a parent?

Is it to say "yes" to whatever the parent says? But when England had fewer people than it has today, Carlyle remarked that "there are thirty million people in England, mostly fools." One doubts if there has been

any change save that of arithmetical progression in England, and if the rest of the world could not have been included by Carlyle.

The fool, then, demands that his asinities be accepted as pearls of wisdom by his children. But that same foolish parent knows that he can make few utterances among those of his own age without being immediately challenged.

Saying "yes," then, is a poor sort of duty.

Obedience? Is that duty? Let us concede it, but let us add the warning that the exaction of a blind obedience into which there enters no sanity is not the way to gain loyal subjects. And with the last word of the last sentence I explain the filial and the parental relation.

There must be authority somewhere in the world or we have no social order. My family is a little world, governed equally by my wife and myself. Two autocrats who try to be benevolent, we sit in never-ending court, passing judgment upon the commissions or omissions of our subjects, (Continued on page 176)



There remains to me only to offer them—companionship.

*A
Story
of A
Heathen
Chinee*

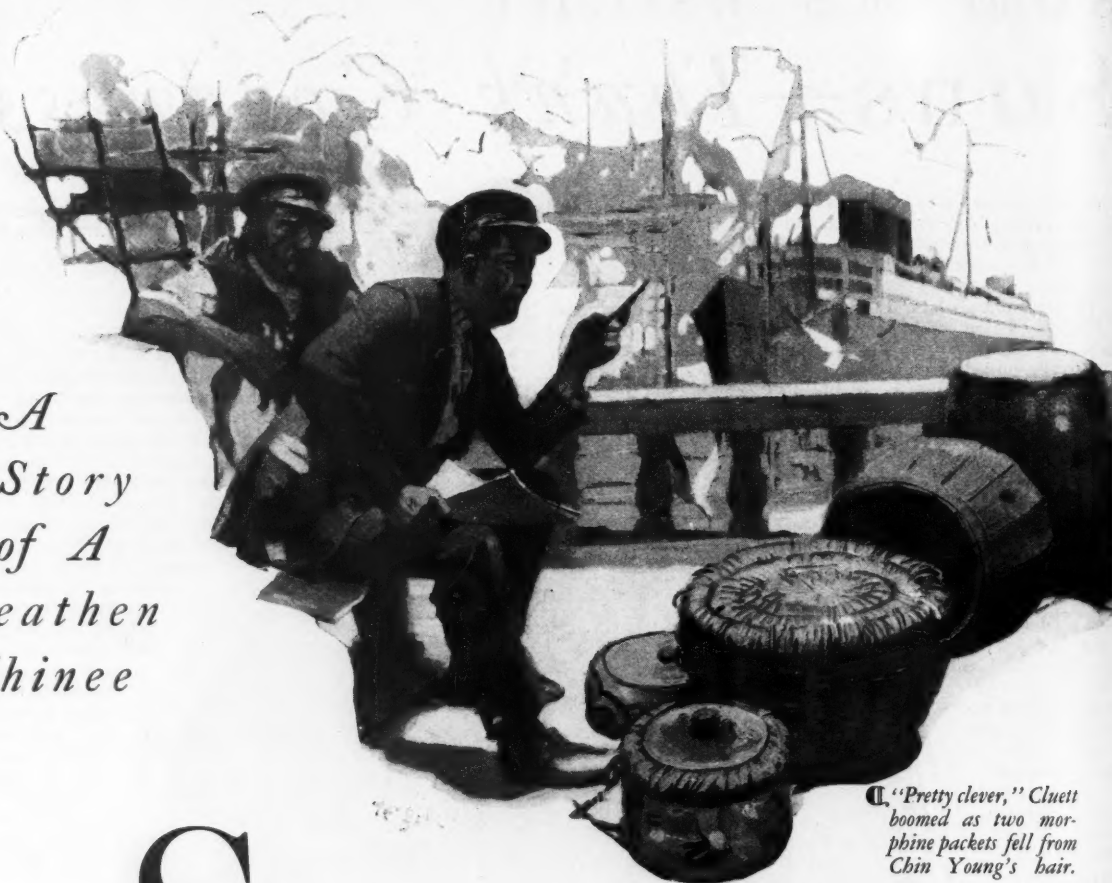
Serpent of

VERY rusty, very ugly, much despised by haughty liners of the P. & O., Blue Funnel and Oceanic, the Lyee-sha usurped wharfing space in Circular Quay and crept there like a hag to a regal bed. From every hold, crack and crevice of her arose abandoned smells, acquired in ports between Sydney and Fuchau, and into every hold, crack and crevice customs men peered for opium and human contraband. They explored bulkheads, coal bunkers and ballast tanks, sounded panels and partitions, searched from galley stew-pots to chart house lockers; while white officers, grown profane and hopeless against the wiles of a coolie crew, showed no surprise when their own bunks yielded flat containers of poppy drug, or strange Chinese, barely able to stand after six wee's' semi-starvation and concealment under rice bales, were routed out for deportation.

"Rice, silk, fiber, spice," said the manifest. "And et-flamin'-cetera," said Rud Earnshaw, supercargo, to William Cluett, chief of customs staff assigned to Eastern shipping. "Thought I was wise to all the tricks, Bill; but see that bandy little Chink with the splay feet? He got clean through the maulers at Townsville last week, but just as he was goin' off the wharf barefooted, Smitty—know Smitty of Townsville, dontcha? Well, Smitty saw he was limpin' a little as though he had foot-rot. First thing you know Smitty up-ends him, an' there's a tin of soothin' sirup gummed to each sole. Blimey!"

Cluett looked distastefully on this pariah ship: three thousand tons of old iron and older roguery; yet, affirming the virtuous spot every sinner is supposed to possess, he accorded the Lyee-sha redemption on just one count. Not her sea manners—an empty pork barrel behaved better in all waters; nor her history, a crime sheet of seizures and fraudulent registries; nor yet the merit of her officers, for a Chinese tramp is a last resort. No sailing grace her saving grace.

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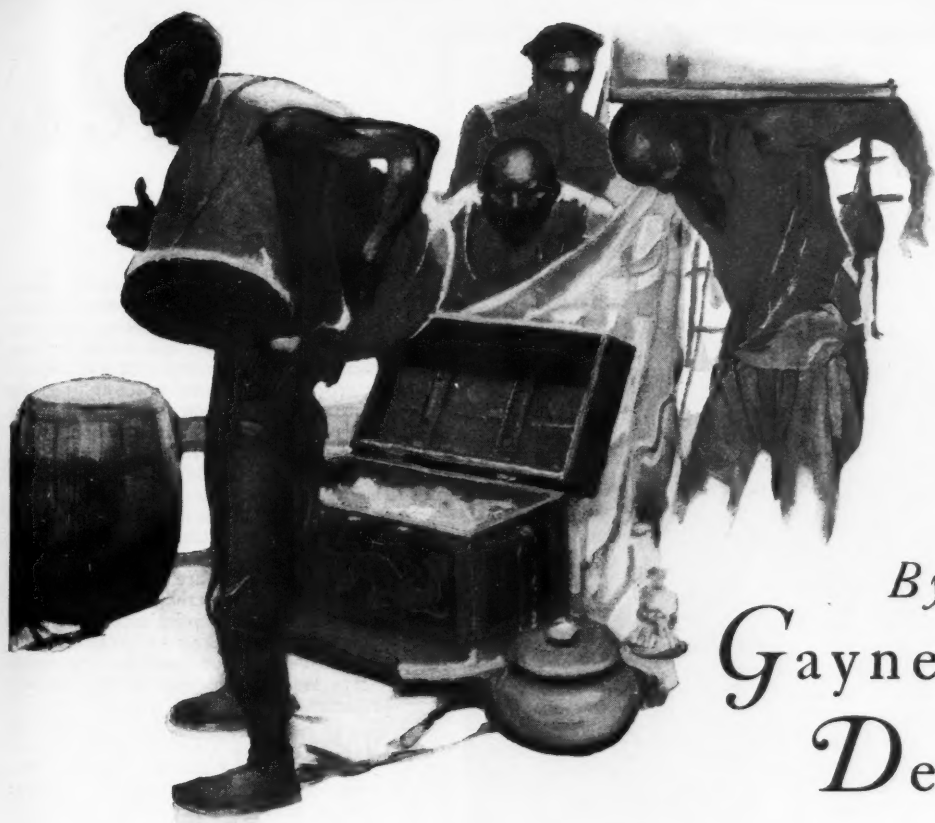
*Cluett
boomed as two mor-
phine packets fell from
Chin Young's bair.*

But down in the galley, astew among pots and pans, his bare flesh glistening to heat of ovens as though integrity overflowed the meager structure of bones and skin and, bursting through his pores, empanopled him from bald head to dungarees, there worked Feng Lee, an honest cook. An honest man. That Feng was cook and yet refused the opportunities his position offered; that Feng retained his faith even in so uncongenial a joss-house as the Lyee-sha's galley, and held great truths against warping foreign suns—Singapore, Java, Zamboanga and assorted sin-spots north, east, south—were sheer miracles. Nevertheless Feng did.

And Bill Cluett respected the achievement, although, had he sailed to Fuchau and discovered the inspirational source, he might have chuckled; for, as by-water amid streams of gamboge, fuscous and streaky white swirling through the market-place, was old Father Tachu, who daily spread his little mat and ragged self behind a dried-fish stall, there to chaffer shrill with sing-song prayer. Close to Heaven, Father Tachu, in his purity of heart; close to earth in the filth of his body; for good men from the Valley Monastery sought only spiritual immaculateness. And water washed no sins away. Completing his macro-cosmic concord, making him of sea as well as of Heaven and earth, Tachu's robes absorbed immediate odors. He walked in an atmosphere of stale fish.

"Truth is a candle to the everlasting glory of our fathers," he preached to a semicircle of idlers, scoffers and devotees. "A lie is a serpent fouling their sacred dust."

Wherefore Feng Lee guarded his own tongue and was scrupulous and poorer for his honesty. He could have extracted a handful from each ration that passed through galley to foc'sle and completed the voyage with a bag or two of flour and rice as personal profit. He could have carried contraband; smuggled



By
Gayne
Dexter

Illustration by
Gustaf Tenggren

LIES

his own countrymen into Australia where black and yellow immigration is debarred; hidden them in galley barrels, then by night in Sydney harbor, while the ship lay at quarantine, sent them down the anchor chains to swim ashore. And for every head bobbing like a coconut among the jetsam, Feng could have clinked ten yellow sovereigns in his pocket. But not the Feng, who burned a candle of truth to his fathers' glory, and approached penury in old age, but drew double rewards: in Fuchau, Old Tachu's blessing; in Sydney, Bill Cluett's grin . . .

THE crew was mustered for shore, with a master's forfeit of one hundred pounds on every saffron head. Deck-hands, stokers, trimmers, formed a rag-tag line along the dock, dunnage and chests immediately before them. Three customs searchers prodded and mauled as fast as Cluett called names from the ship's roster. Mounted on a bale, he loomed round and red-faced, a rock of disaster to yellow enterprise, and an outrage to the stiff-spined supervisors who regretted his favorite pose as undignified, so inexcusably American. He should have stood importantly to impress these coolies with the Crown's omnipotence; but Bill, born in Seattle, reared on the Pacific slopes, and enlisted from the U. S. Customs at Honolulu into Australian service for his uncanny understanding of the surreptitious Chinese, owed fealty to neither kings nor conventions. There were times when, answering from his chest, he threatened to become an international complication.

Rud Earnshaw, the supercargo, lounged on an adjoining bale, a long unkempt figure in soiled ducks, apparently uninterested, yet flicking the line with sharp eyes wedged closely to his nose, which jutted like a promontory above a loose, always moving mouth. Neither degenerate nor decayed was Earnshaw. He

bloomed as nature intended, lusty as lantana—which is a rank, pestilential growth. Cluett could glance at him and know just where to seek him in any native port; and as if outward signs did not tell enough, Earnshaw psalmed discolored exploits before unfastidious audiences.

Cluett boomed out names. Half an hour of:

"Hop Yin! Hop along there." And Hop, having hopped, saw two cans of opium go the way of unlucky contraband. With his chest he joined the ranks of the shorn. "War Hang! Who's War Hang? Make it snappy, lad . . . What's that? Four cans? Say, we'll hold this guy. Got him with three last trip, didn't we? . . . Lo Foo! Nothing. All right . . . Chin Young! Long time since I saw a Chink with a pigtail. They still wearing them, Earnshaw? . . . Whoa there! Bring him back. Let down your queue, John . . . *Pret-ty* clever." Two morphine packets fell from Chin Young's hair. "See that, Earnshaw?"

"Yairs. Watch the bandy body, too. *Phew!* 'S'ot, ain't it?" The supercargo wiped his dirty palm across lips which remained momentarily distorted as he had drawn them. "Iced lager aboard. Could you keep one down?"

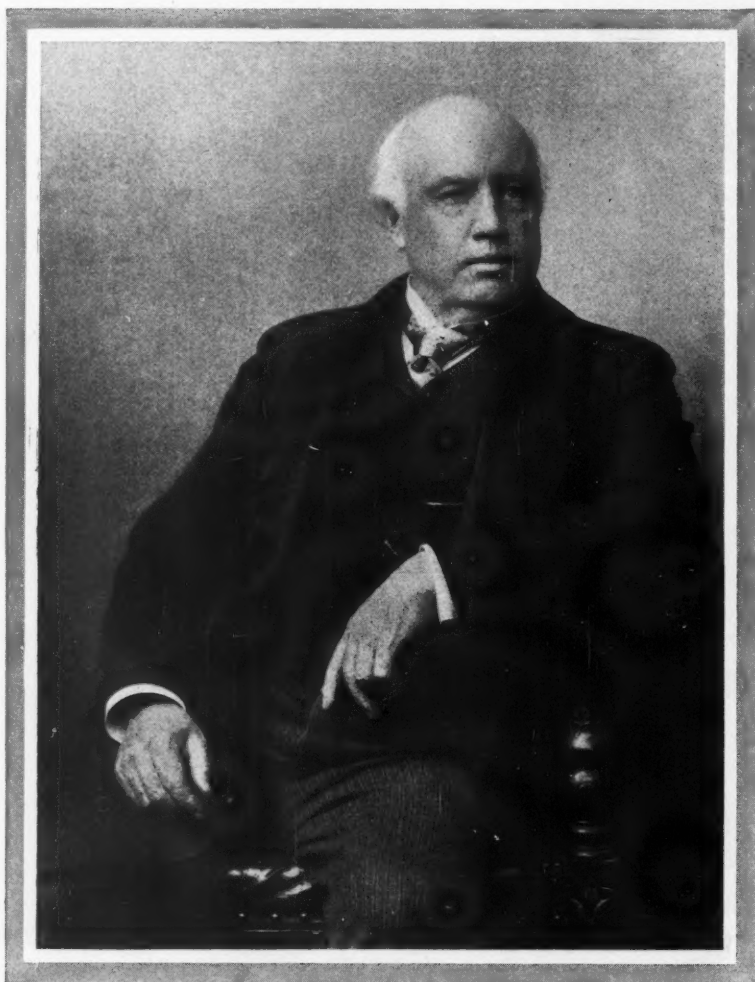
Cluett's face trickled earnestly. Heat ricocheted from the harbor, was caught, intensified and hurled back by the red iron wharf houses. He sweated between two fires.

"No; afterwards. These poor beggars want to get away," he said, surveying the patient line.

"Blimey!" Earnshaw muttered. "Slavin' for a Chink."

Cluett ploughed on: Sam Wah, Ah Low, Tung Sin Yee, Pings and Pongs, Fats and Foos, who paid unwilling tribute, out-guessed the searchers, or were blameless. Eventually:

"Feng Lee! Why, here's the old king of smugglers himself," Bill hailed. "Morning, Feng. Come (Continued on page 138)"



Photograph Meserve Collection

Robert G. Ingersoll

SINCE I have been given a license to free-lance and have been egged on to write from the heart out, regardless of consequences, so long as the output does not annoy intelligent readers, it strikes me that an author who is juggling recollections makes a mistake in trying to be chronological, consecutive and inclusive. When you start out to tell the whole story you get in too much piffing detail. The only autobiographies which really annoy are those giving the dates on which trains were missed and oatmeal was served for breakfast.

A few years ago my old friend "Punch" Wheeler, the well-known tall grass impresario who thought out the idea of painting the chorus on the scenery in order to cut down the pay-roll, issued a volume called "The Story of my Life up to this Time." It looked like a forty-nine-cent book of two-cent stamps and contained only one remarkable tale that I remember. Punch organized a "Camille" company in 1891 and took it northwest. While the dramatic organization was far up in Wisconsin and the ghost hadn't walked a step in two weeks, Armand Duval, the Lady of the Camellias and all the other members of the cast walked out on Punch and began to pick huckleberries in order to get some real money.

However, what I started to tell about the autobiography was that the chapter headed "My Experiences between 1883 and 1887" consisted of four pages absolutely blank except for a simple footnote which stated that during these four years nothing happened! Punch was certainly an exception to the rule when he had the courage to refrain from writing about nothing in particular.

Also, when you are on a first person singular spree, don't slip in too many anecdotes in which you dominate as the central figure. Don't be like the pulsating genius who wrote me an eight-page letter a few years ago telling of the arrival of the first-born. He told of the emotions which surged within him as he held that tiny, blinking manikin in his arms for the first

By GEORGE ADE

time. He told of the visions which came to him and the sensations which came crowding as he suddenly realized that this boy—his boy—might live to sit on the summit of the year 2000. It was a characteristic and beautiful letter and seemed to cover the situation from almost every angle except that I had no reason to believe, after a careful study of the letter, that the mother of the child was present before, during or after the delivery.

Continuing the same line of thought, was anyone ever thrilled to learn that some one else sank one from off the green? Do you think you are making the world happier when you exhibit the snap-shots taken on the last camping trip? And when you are telling how you caught such a bad cold—have you ever seen that moss-agate look in the eyes of the helpless listener?

IN FIXING up for Mr. Ray Long, of this magazine, some true stories of celebrities seen at close range, it strikes me that I should permit them to figure rather prominently at their own obsequies. Of course, I am going to use the upper-case "I" until I sicken everyone except myself, but I shall endeavor to associate myself with notables whose performances were unusual and who are still remembered.

If, somewhere in the beyond, there is a definite space allotted to ex-mortals, and if the previous visitors to our planet are assembled there and are something more tangible than puffs of smoke or clots of

vapor, then it is possible that a rosy-cheeked, round-faced, smiling and slightly bald gentleman of plump build is sitting on the edge of a cloud watching us and laughing his head off. The great joke to him would be that preachers who continue to hang on to their pulpits are saying the very things for which he, Bob Ingersoll, was figuratively burned at the stake just a few years ago.

Thirty years ago it was legal and proper to drink a Manhattan cocktail that would give the jumps to a bronze statue, but anyone who said that Joshua never made the sun stand still was drummed out of camp. We were taught in Sunday-school that the universe was created, literally, in six working days. It was made just as a carpenter might build a house, except that the only materials on which to work were void and darkness. Along about Friday afternoon, as an after-thought, the stars were turned out.

Robert G. Ingersoll, a fluent lawyer, practising in Illinois, made himself the most openly denounced and the most secretly admired person in the United States by coming out on the platform and poking fun at the Bible as a record of historical events. He was more of a rhetorician than a logician, but he was the prize orator of his day. His talk was full of scrollwork and comedy and bright colors and he became the idol of all the renegades, most of whom were afraid to speak out for themselves.

When I was a boy just old enough to aspire to the distinction of being severe and skeptical, I read the lectures by Ingersoll, which were printed in cheap leaflet form. The lectures had to be bootlegged and never were read in the house—always in the haymow. We loved them. They gave us the goose pimples. Bob was defying and flaunting all the preachers and hard moralists and Sunday-school tyrants and we had a terrified admiration for him because he was sassing the people who had kept us locked in for so many pleasant Sabbaths and who had crushed our spirit of research when we asked *how* Jonah could have remained

Some High Spots

inside of the whale so long, and *why* didn't the flames injure Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and were they *real* lions that walked all around Daniel without trying to bite him?

We had been told to believe everything "from kiver to kiver" whether we understood it or not. It was suggested that if we took a pencil and tried to figure how it could rain enough in forty days completely to cover Mt. Everest, which is 29,002 feet high, then we would recline forever on a bed of coals, like frankfurter sausages.

Speaking of the Deluge, it was William S. Gilbert who wrote to a friend about forty years ago that he was trying very hard to believe everything in the Scriptures. He said he was even ready to accept the Noah story. He admitted the possibility of two animals of every species coming from the ends of the earth to get aboard the Ark before the water was too high. He believed that possibly two polar bears came all the way from the Arctic Circle and two kangaroos hopped all the way from Australia. Only one part of the whole narrative seemed to him almost out of the question. He figured that there was a very large and assorted and aromatic menagerie on board the Ark. Also Noah and his relatives. The account does not refer to shower-baths or crash towels. The craft floated for many weeks and it didn't seem plausible to Mr. Gilbert that during all that period there were only two fleas on board.

It has been only twenty-six years since Bob Ingersoll passed on. Just after he died we heard stories that on his death-bed he repented and wept and shrieked for forgiveness because he had dared to say for many years that Moses made a few mistakes. Now, I remember my Ingersoll just as I remember my Scriptures. I was deeply interested in both of them, just as I was interested in Horatio Alger, Jr., Charles Dickens, Doctor Livingstone, Harry Castlemon, and Silver Star, the Boy Knight.

Bob Ingersoll was not an atheist. He always said that there had to be a Supreme Intelligence directing the whole orderly progress of life. He believed that there was a Divine Being and he was confident that He would be fair-minded and charitable and considerate in His judgment of weak mortals and would not punish any man for having an honest doubt as to the absolute correctness of any printed document. Well, that is just about what some of our popular heretics have been saying from the pulpit within the last year or two, and almost getting away with it. So that is why Bob Ingersoll is chuckling over the changes that have come about since he was regarded as a satanic influence.

In 1891 when I was a very young and terrified reporter, I went to interview Colonel Ingersoll at the old Palmer House in Chicago. It was a great afternoon for me and probably a boring hour to him, but he was cheerful, patient and obliging, and he knew how to be interviewed.

He moved me up to a table and told me to write down carefully any questions I wished to ask. After I had written the questions

he said to me: "Now of course you don't write shorthand. Please take your pencil and write very carefully as I dictate and I will answer your questions in turn. Then you will read over what you have written and I will make sure that you have got everything right and I want you to turn in just what I have said. Don't add anything that has slipped out in my casual talk with you. If you pad out this interview by reporting some of the things I said on the side you will not get my exact words and probably you will not convey to your readers just what I meant."

He sat there and slowly dictated and I took down his exact words and got a wonderful interview, for which I was highly complimented. It was an interview much different from the kind too often printed. I have always said that it is a big mistake for a busy newspaper man to grab a hurried conversation with some man who is under appraisal by the public, and then go back to the office about an hour later and try to repeat from memory what was said.

I know, to give an example, that among the newspaper offices in Chicago there was always a definite belief that William H. Vanderbilt never made use of the words "The public be damned." The story as we had it on the inside was that the excitable journalist who interviewed Mr. Vanderbilt on the train came back to the office and turned in his interview and then, while sitting around with the night gang, happened to relate that he had suggested something about the interests of the public and that Mr. Vanderbilt had intimated that the public could be damned so far as he cared. An alert member of the staff rushed in to the night editor and said that it would be great stuff to add to the interview.

The editor loved head-lines and hot stuff, so he hunted up the reporter and told him to revise the copy and insert the sensational statement. The boys who knew the reporter and his characteristics always said that he was gifted with more imagination than accuracy and they suspected that he had made a loose statement in idle conversation and then didn't have the courage to back up on it. In other words, they never really believed that William H. Vanderbilt said it. If Mr. Vanderbilt had known as much about the newspaper game as Bob Ingersoll knew, he would have had every word of his statement taken down

painfully in longhand and one of the most devastating incidents of the nineteenth century would have been headed off.

As a graduate of the newspaper shop I may speak fully of interviewers. For years after I acquired a sudden and not altogether welcome notoriety as a vendor of the American vernacular, nearly every young gentleman who interviewed me had me talk barbaric slang. Yet always, when speaking to a reporter, I have kept my fingers crossed and talked Brander Matthews.

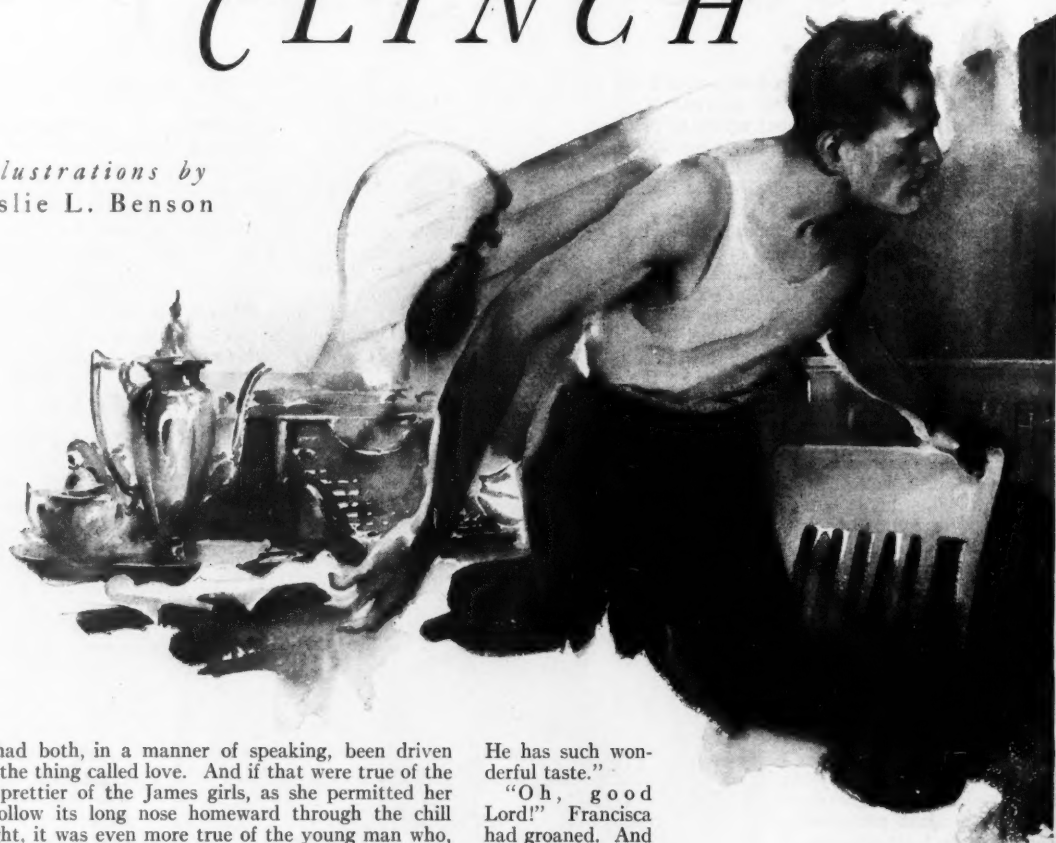
I started in to write about Colonel Ingersoll, John L. Sullivan, Professor Lounsbury, Steve Brodie, Henry M. Stanley and "Hell-Roaring" Jake Smith, and this is where I finish up.



William H. Vanderbilt

The Inevitable CLINCH

Illustrations by
Leslie L. Benson



THEY had both, in a manner of speaking, been driven a bit mad by the thing called love. And if that were true of the younger and prettier of the James girls, as she permitted her roadster to follow its long nose homeward through the chill December night, it was even more true of the young man who, with murder in his eye and blood on his dress shirt, stood bare-headed in the snow at the crossroads toward which the roadster was shaping its course.

Love! The younger of the James girls gritted her teeth. She felt as if she could write a book on the subject. A wholly original sort of a book, based on her conviction that love was something to be avoided as one would the plague.

Others, she knew, felt differently. She had heard love defined in many ways, but always eulogistically. They were all wrong.

Asked for her own definition, she would have given it forthwith. "Love," she would have said, "is a mushy, sticky disease that sneaks up on its victims like the measles or the mumps and leaves them a total loss."

The younger of the James girls had been privileged—though she would have said condemned—to view a victim of love at close range. Her older sister Jessica—older by a matter of two hours—had in November been smitten with the illusion that a run-of-the-mill young man she had met at a Harvard-Dartmouth hop had been created expressly for her and she for him. As he had been similarly affected, they were now engaged.

This, to Francisca, younger of the James girls, seemed posterous. To her eye Bobby Beals was no different from any other man Jessica might have met anywhere. He was a well-bred, somewhat pampered young Harvard man. When you had said that you had said all. She felt he certainly was nothing to rave about.

And yet: "Do you think he'll like my hat?" Jessica had asked fearfully.

They had been waiting for the train that was to take Jessica to Baltimore where she was to spend an idyllic Christmas at a house party with the ultimate he.

"What difference does it make whether he likes it or not?" Francisca had demanded.

"What difference?" Jessica had echoed, as shocked as if sacrilege had been committed. "Why, it would be—awful if he didn't!

He has such wonderful taste."

"Oh, good Lord!" Francisca had groaned. And goaded to it, had added, "What makes you think he's different from any other man?"

"You can't see that he is?" Jessica's eyes were wide.

"No," Francisca had retorted downrightly.

"Well, he is!" Jessica had insisted indignantly. "I—oh, Franny, I can't explain it! But when he kisses me it—it seems to run right down to my toes!"

And that was what love had done to Jessica! Good night!

The train had arrived most opportunely. The twins had shaken hands—they seldom kissed—and then off had gone the train and Jessica to where her heart and thoughts were already.

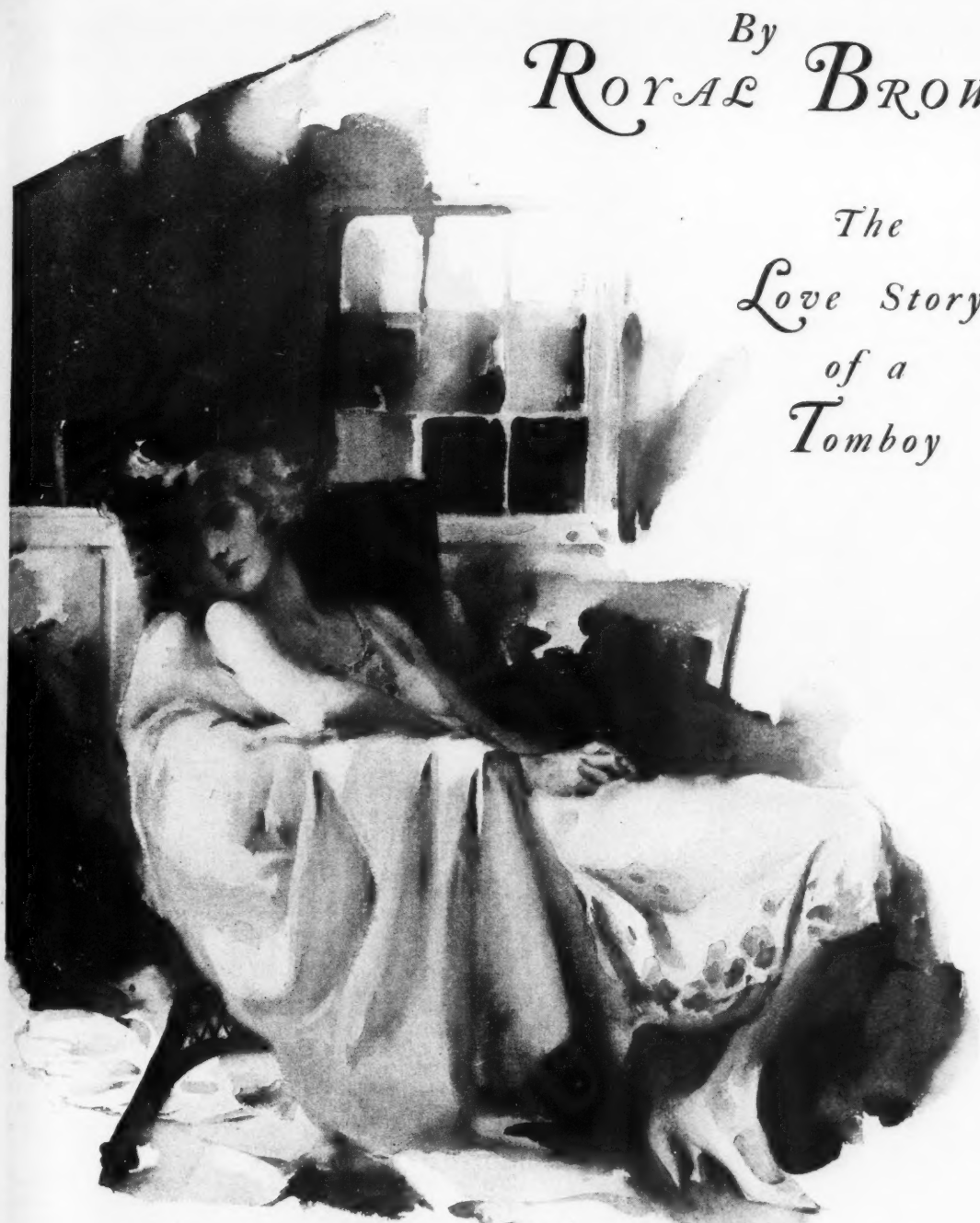
Francisca had returned to her roadster, squirmed in behind the wheel and started back home at forty miles an hour. This was her usual pace—when she was in no particular hurry. There was nothing to hurry her now. Her father was on the ocean, returning from London to spend Christmas with her. In the meantime the great house which overlooked Massachusetts Bay was empty, save for a small army of servants. So Franny took her time. And thought of Jessica—and love.

They—she and Jessica—were twins, but twins with an unusual distinction, for though they were much of a size when they were born and were still able to exchange everything from shoes to step-ins now when they were twenty, they never had looked alike. Their twinhood was all under the skin. There they had been alike—until Jessica met her Bobby—both being what everybody had prophesied they would become. Which was utterly spoiled, with no respect for anything or anybody.

This was their father's fault. If he did not know that, it was not for the want of being told so. But he had remained unperturbed. He had a sense of humor which most people considered perverted. Even the advent of twin girls had failed to diminish that.

By
ROYAL BROWN

The
Love Story
of a
Tomboy



Here was a situation such as he had never handled. What had he best do? Should he steal away without waking Franny?

"We have decided," he had said then, answering the customary question, "to name the little monkey with the dark fuzz Jessica and the one with the light fuzz Francisca."

"Jessica? Francisca?" his astonished inquisitor had echoed. "For whom?"

"For fun," he had replied very soberly.

Everybody suspected it was some sort of a joke. In time they saw it. For his last name was James, of course, and although he had been christened William there were those who, when they were sure his back was turned, called him Jesse James. They also called him a thief, a bank wrecker and even a murderer. He was very rich and so had many critics. The twins had never been among these. They had found him an indulgent father and always a friend in need. They had often needed a friend.

They would have preferred to have been born boys and, in the beginning, with only a shadowy conception of the biological

handicap they were up against, they had done their best to overcome the fault of birth. The trouble was that various feminine and even masculine relatives persisted in considering them little girls.

At Christmas and upon other anniversaries, when gifts were in order, the twins received such things as little girls are supposed to crave. Dolls. Doll carriages. Doll houses. It was very discouraging.

The twins, however, had had their father's genius for turning adversity into opportunity and their dolls had lived a hard life. No pampered puppets were those golden-haired, blue-eyed beauties. They walked planks, suffered torture and were even burned at the stake.

They were the James boys—Frank and Jesse—at such times as they were not pirates or Indians. It was their father who had put that idea in their heads.

"How can I do anything with them?" their mother had demanded. "You spoil and encourage them so: They'll never be anything but tomboys."

The twins had been so referred to, certainly, up to the time they were eighteen. After that they were referred to as terrors. But even then their father never admitted regret.

"I am sure of one thing," he remarked, "and that is that no young man who values his life will ever attempt to start a petting party with them."

No young man ever did. They grew up as pretty as pictures, but their masculine contemporaries ever treated them with respect founded not upon chivalry, but upon fear. The twins were not mushy. They were hard-boiled.

At least they had been until, without warning, this mysterious change in Jessica had been wrought.

"Love!" jeered Franny, and if a pretty nose can be guilty of a sort, hers was.

AND so it was that she came upon the other love-maddened rebel as he stood in the snow at the crossroads.

The shaft her headlights cast disclosed him blocking her way. She blew her horn sharply. He did not move. She blew again. He must be either deaf, drunk or crazy. Her roadster skidded and then scrunched to a pause as she applied her service brake just in time to prevent running him down.

"Well?" she snapped.

He did not even look at her. He merely gestured irritably. "G'way!" he commanded. "G'way or—I'll choke you."

Now that was surprising enough. More surprising still was her sudden realization that, though the sky was overcast and the chill of an approaching storm was in the air, the man in the road wore neither a hat nor an overcoat over his dress suit.

From a pocket he produced a cigaret case. He snapped this open and placed a cigaret between his lips. It was evident, from his expression, that he had completely forgotten her. She set her teeth and started the roadster toward him in low. As her bumper touched his legs he glared at her, startled.

"I suppose," he snapped, "you have a horn. Do you regard it as an ornament?"

This was incredible.

"Are you accustomed to parking yourself in the middle of the road?" she demanded. "Or are you just trying to commit suicide?"

He glanced about him. "Why—am I in your way?" he asked.

"Oh, not at all!" she retorted. "I can run over you without any permanent damage to the car. But I thought you might prefer to step to one side."

The sarcasm was plainly lost upon him. "Have you a match?" he asked abruptly.

"No—but there's a cigaret lighter on the dashboard if you care to use it," she replied.

"Thanks," he murmured and came toward her.

From the dashboard she plucked the lighter and handed it to him. As he placed it to the tip of his cigaret she inventoried him rapidly. A young college man from one of the house parties in the neighborhood, she decided. There was a big one on at the Merryweathers'. And of course drunk—that explained everything. Not bad looking but—

She gave a little involuntary jump.

The bosom of his evening shirt was covered with—blood!

Now deplorably enough Franny, at an age when most girls read the modern version of the Elsie books, had been more interested in the exploits of the James boys and other literature of that type. And even now her taste in fiction had a decided slant toward dime novels bound in cloth and sold for two dollars net. The sort that begin with an evening-clothed corpse in the library, usually with a dagger of curious design stuck between the fourth and fifth ribs.

So to Franny evening clothes and blood suggested nothing short of murder. And being Franny she neither fainted nor wondered what her next move might be. From a pocket in the door beside her she produced an automatic.

"Put up your hands," she commanded briskly.

Instead he stared at her as if he doubted his ears.

"I can remove the pip from an ace of hearts at twenty paces with this," she assured him, quoting from one of her favorite authors. "So make it snappy!"

He glanced at the automatic. "My word!" he exclaimed, with a sudden quickening of eye and voice that suggested that he couldn't be so very drunk after all. "You aren't by any chance one of those bobbed-haired bandits one reads about, are you?"

This she disdained. "Are you going to put up your hands or are you not?" she demanded.

He grinned as if this were a pleasantry. "I suppose," he said, "that if I don't my life isn't worth a nickel!"

"Less than that!" she retorted crisply.

The grin faded from his face. "It's not worth that anyway," he assured her gloomily. "Go on and shoot—I beg you to. In fact I'll sign a written release absolving you from all blame and acclaiming you as a public benefactor." To which he added, even more gloomily, "And others will agree, I feel sure."

To Franny it became apparent that he had no intention of putting up his hands. This was a shock to her because in books hands always went up the instant an automatic appeared. She did not know just what to do next.

The matter was settled for her. He reached out swiftly and grasping the hand that held her weapon, possessed himself of it by a most unchivalrous twist of her wrist.

"I'll take charge of this," he said, thrusting her automatic in his pocket. "It may come in handy to blow my brains out if I so decide—as I think I will."

Franny's wrist ached like fury and she felt outraged. "I wish you'd do it now," she assured him passionately.

As she spoke she slipped in her clutch. He was standing on the running board but she hoped that, by starting the car with a jerk, he would be thrown off. He was not, mainly because the car did not start with a jerk—or otherwise.

The wheels merely skidded for a maddening interval. And before they finally secured traction he had guessed her purpose and was in the seat beside her. The car did jerk then.

"My dear!" he protested. "A little more skill in the manipulation of the throttle. Life is not particularly sweet to me just now, but I do prefer comparative comfort while I live. Would you prefer that I drive? You are probably unstrung."

"Where," demanded Franny, "do you think you're going?"

"I know not, neither do I care," he replied. "I can truthfully say 'Whither thou goest, I go.'"

"I'll drive you to the nearest police station," she assured him. Second thought might have suggested that it were wiser not to have told him that. But Franny was not addicted to second thought.

"What a lark!" he commented. "But who will bail you out?"

"Bail me out?"

"At least one eye on the road, please!" he commanded. And added: "You threatened me with a dangerous weapon and though I dislike to prefer charges against you, a strong sense of public duty suggests that I should. But perhaps if this is your first offense you'll escape with a comparatively light sentence."

So he thought he could bluff her that way!

"And how," she suggested, "will you explain your appearance? Are you aware of the fact that your shirt is covered with blood?"

He glanced down. "Why, so it is!" he acknowledged. "What a *faux pas*! I try to acquaint myself with what the well-dressed man is wearing, but I confess that I have no precedent to offer for blood on an evening shirt. Still, I did not know that it was a penal offense."

"It depends," she explained austere, "how it got there."

HE GAVE her a swift glance. "I do believe," he protested plaintively, "that you suspect me of murder. But you should know, my child, that you must have the body of my victim—*corpus delicti*, I believe is the legal term—to offer in evidence before you can establish basis for a charge. Besides, do I look like a murderer?"

"You look like a murderer," she assured him, "and you act like an escaped lunatic—"

"The latter is not so far from right," he cut in. "Yet even so, the police might demand some proof."

"Well, anyway," exploded Franny, "you said yourself that you might commit suicide before morning. The police could lock you up for that."

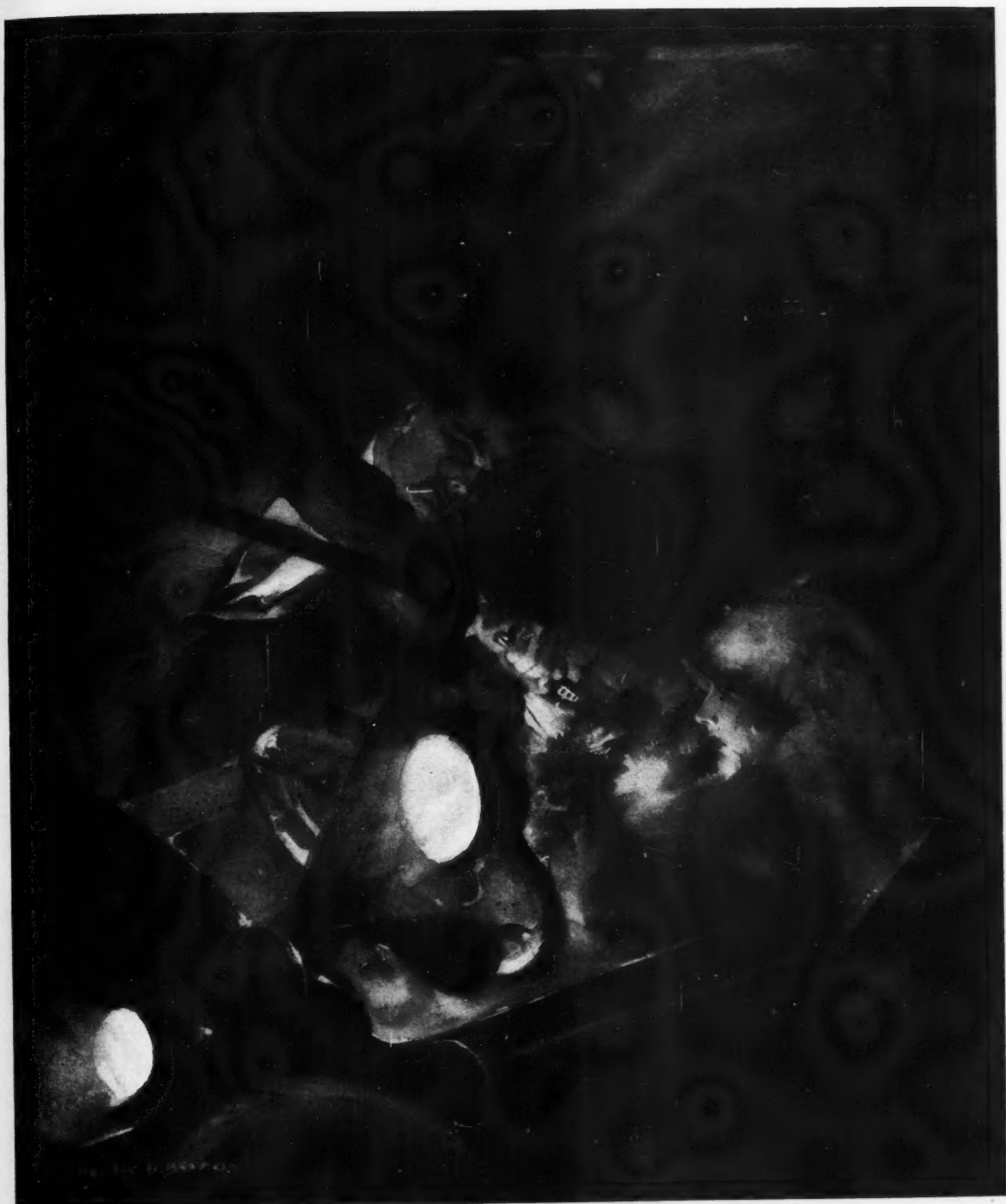
"Quite so. Even one's life is not one's own nowadays. But I've changed my mind since meeting you. Oh, don't blush so!"

"I'm not!" she denied indignantly.

"Well, you should be," he argued reasonably. "Anyway, I was about to assure you that my interest in you is wholly professional. I can use a girl like you in my business."

"What's your business?"

"I prefer not to state at the moment. But I *am* a desperate man! Would you mind stepping on the gas? I find the night chilly. And let's forget this talk about police stations. Home, James. Or should I say—Miss James?"



"I'll take charge of this," he said. It was a shock to Franny, because in books hands always went up the instant an automatic appeared.

Franny gave him a startled glance. "How did you know my name?" she demanded.

"I took a chance. But the description I had heard of you seemed to fit. You are one of the James girls, the younger, I imagine. I was told that the younger was the prettier."

"Are you trying to flatter me? Because—"

"And the worse of the two," he added smoothly. "My hostess—Mrs. Merryweather—told me I really ought to meet you. She intimated that you were incredible."

"Oh, Mrs. Merryweather!" interjected Franny with scorn.

"I agree with you," he said. "She means well, but she certainly deserves to get a knife stuck between her third and fourth ribs. That woman is enough to drive any man to murder."

In spite of herself Franny gave him a swift, questioning glance. "And as a matter of indisputable truth," he added, "I suspect that is how the blood got on my shirt. I had no idea it was there until you called my attention to it because from the moment when the impulse to slay her came until you found me in the road all is a blank."

As he finished he bent forward and snapped off her ignition. "If you will change places with me, I'll drive," he explained as the car came to a standstill. "I trust I won't have to use force."

Inasmuch as he looked capable of it, Franny decided to give him no excuse to.

"Thank you," said he, slipping in (Continued on page 157)

We Knew

A Romance of a Small-town Girl— with the Wisdom of Eve

WHEN he was quite young, Myrick Cleaver was too inept with language to describe rightly his feeling toward Julia Blatchford. It was simple dislike. Myrick said strongly, "I jus' despise her."

To his father, at one trenchant interview, he tried to justify himself.

"Honest, pa, Mis' Hatton is crazy over spelling! Jus' crazy! But shewouldn't holler so at us boys if it wasn't for Julia Blatchford and another girl or two!"

Myrick Cleaver Senior had his real estate office in the same K. O. O. P. building which held the oak law desk of Homer E. Blatchford. He could not be made to understand the malefic influence of his townsman's small daughter on his son's life.

Neither could Fred Pratt's or Willy Marbury's fathers. The Taft and Hoffman families lived "across the tracks"; that part of town where front yards were merely muddy in spring, not tidy green grass plots, and where instead of neat one-car garages, alleyways were flanked by heaped tin cans and ashes all the year round. Parents living in that part of town were less interested in monthly report cards. Luckily for their sons!

Perhaps Myrick Cleaver had too sensitive a soul.



He was the worst speller, except Pike Hoffman and Willy Marbury, in his room. And some of his days were bitter beyond the salt bitterness of tears.

"Myrick, you may spell *paralysis*," Miss Hatton would say briskly.

"P—pa—pary—"

"Myrick, you may sit down! Sit down! Julia"—oh! change of voice from actually tart to slightly dulcet; teachers are but weak creatures—"Julia, you may tell Myrick how to spell *paralysis*."

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Him When

By *Ida M. Evans*



Illustration by
H. R. Ballinger

"Guess you don't need peroxide, Julia," said Pike in involuntary admiration. "I wish it was black," sighed Julia.

"P-a-r-a-l-y-s-i-s," would come glibly; Julia's gentle voice half pained as if at such ignorance in the world.

It was not within the memory of a sixth grader that Julia Blatchford had ever missed a word.

"I wonder how much time you put on your spelling, Myrick!" Miss Hatton would say darkly.

Julia had a small white pug nose and braided blond hair. She wore dainty gingham dresses with white organdy pockets. Mrs. Blatchford liked to see her little girls looking nice always.

Once Pike Hoffman filled one crisp dainty pocket with dead mashed angworms. Once Myrick slapped his brown corduroy sides and shrieked with unholy glee when Julia's Christmas skates wobbled and she went bellybuster over eight white feet of Ohiofield pond ice.

To Middle Western towns of America, connected as they are by the price of cement, the length of women's skirts, Harold Lloyd, and "Caro Nome" by Galli Curci on a twelve-inch disc, spring comes two-faced. It is a Janus with blue wood-violets and bluebirds' courting on one side and on the other cast-off underwear, wet mops and a wholesale upheaval of closets and pantry shelves.

Of an abrupt wind-ruffled Monday morning in Ohiofield, there is a general slamming open of side porch doors and upper windows. The Cleaver living-room rug sails out brown and tan to a clothes-line which presently sags under its nine by twelve burden. Melly Johnson chucks her steel thimble and adjustable

wire dress form to a corner and will promise neither sleeve nor skirt hem till her cottage's five ceilings are calsomined. The voices of wives and husbands in altercation float out front windows—"I don't ask to live in luxury like some women, Henry! But I told you last spring I would *not* go a single other year without new portières for the sitting-room—"

In his fourteenth spring, on his way to Saturday baseball by the tracks, Myrick passed the Blatchford residence. It was a large, rather handsome frame house, much like Myrick's own home, white trimmed with green, with two porches. Its corner lot exposed the yard to double street view. Myrick was pleased at what he saw.

He told Joe Taft.

"She had her mother's oldest apron tied about her neck and she was rinsing out an ol' dirty mop. I hope her mother keeps her workin' every day for a month!" Joe did, too.

A year later, for another game of ball, Myrick walked the same way, and smiled broadly as he passed the Blatchford corner. With her chunky face not clean, Julia was carrying old bottles out to a barrel that stood beside her father's neat one-car garage.

"Aw, Julia-a! Ain't it a nice sunny day!" he called loudly. So a young Caius might have taunted an early Christian maiden whom he had come upon scrubbing the outer pillars of the arena.

"You shut up, Myrick Cleaver, and go about your own business," retorted Julia, red on her cheek and blue fire in her eyes.

For something not connected with girls, that Saturday was memorable; for a while anyhow. Pike Hoffman had broken a window of the Jenks and Anderson store the night before and that morning ran away, as he had often threatened he might, to be a prizefighter. Pike was a large unpleasant boy with squinty gray eyes and a lop-sided nose, given to batting fouts, to unfair wrestling and to squirting tobacco juice—he chewed early in life—on the smaller boys' new shoes.

It is doubtful if Julia Blatchford ever noticed Pike's going. She did not care much for any boys at that time. But she was wont particularly to elevate her small pug white nose at those who lived "across the tracks"; that place of ne'er-do-well families, muddy yards and shrill, slovenly mothers who did not wash windows weekly or keep babies out of the dirt.

Pike remained away, having run, and with Ohiofield in general even Myrick Cleaver and the other boys partly forgot him; at least for several years until his name burst onto all sporting pages. There were things more important for those who stayed at home to hold in mind. High school with laboratory experiments was one and long pants another and new family cars another.

The Cleaver five-passenger was merely a car for a long while to Myrick Cleaver Senior's son; something to ride places in, and watch the tires and the cylinders. Later—

THERE came a spring of better wood flowers, of swifter bluebirds and whiter moon than any other spring had brought. And passing the Blatchford place in early April, Myrick Cleaver paused abruptly and then jumped hurriedly over the low even hedge. He was five feet eleven and a half that year; his white wool sweater was the largest size carried by Jenks and Anderson; and his thick light brown hair always hinted pleasantly of recent soaping.

He took hold of a pail of dark sudsy water and he exclaimed with indignation:

"This is too heavy for you, Julia! Let me empty it. I don't think your mother ought to—"

"Oh, it isn't my mother's fault!" said Julia. "But every year at this time"—hotly—"that Gussy Taft says she 'doesn't feel well!' Oh, Myrick!" She was suddenly dismayed. "You let that dirty water drip on your sleeve!"

Myrick smiled down at the girl hastily wiping his white sleeve. Julia! In a few years she had cast away chubbiness like a cocoon. She was tall and slim. Her hair was a daffodil cloud drawn under a dust cap. Her eyes at times were youthful blue seas of mystery. Her pink and white skin was firm, like an apple, and fragrant, like spring flowers.

Driving his father down to the office that morning, Myrick had been conscious of the faint sachet perfume still lingering about the back of the seat which Julia Blatchford had occupied the evening before. When she sat beside you in a car she had a trick of half turning her face away while she talked to you, lifting it a little to the sweep of cool air.

Thus turned, the line of her cheek was a white line of absolute beauty. Absolute beauty is rare. Artists seek it with maniacal zeal. Poets have died trying to hold to a dream of it. Myrick Cleaver often became somewhat inarticulate when he looked at Julia Blatchford's half turned face.

They had arranged their future with a fine carelessness. Myrick would go into his father's office of course. Julia's father would give them a vacant lot which he owned on upper Fourth Street. They might rent the smaller Marbury cottage until they built a bungalow. Julia wanted a sun porch on the bungalow. Myrick thought his father might buy a new car in the next year or so and let him have the old one for his own.

This was just before high school graduation. Myrick wrote most of Julia's twelve foolscap pages on "The Future Effect of Radio on Main Street." She had not cared much for that subject, she protested half tearfully, but that had been assigned her in lieu of "Modern Poets." White organdy over a yellow satin slip was more on Julia's mind that month than rheostats or the vers librists' weird wordings.

Myrick's own subject was "The Lincoln Highway." He wished "Pugilists I Have Known." In distant places Pike Hoffman had arrived a year or so back, pugilistically speaking, and the Hoffman family, still living in a dilapidated frame house and never a respected economic unit of the town, had begun to hoist an absent member's fame as petard to a wall of disrepute and inferiority. But five others in the class wished "Pugilists I Have Known," so impartially school heads barred this subject to all.

Anyhow, Grandfather Cleaver had transcontinental highways as his old-age hobby and he wished some of his knowledge aired for the young and the old of his town.

Myrick's grandfather, a straight-backed old gentleman with fine white hair and given to garrulity and a silver-topped walnut cane, had once run for Congress in that part of the State. Far back, in the mugwump days. He was almost elected. Unluckily it was an off year for his party. The younger generation often heard the older folks discuss the event.

It was toward the old gentleman, not Myrick's good-humored bald father of somewhat more ordinary fortunes, that Julia Blatchford's youthfully dreamy blue eyes turned one day some twelve months after graduation. The two were walking down the street where she and the younger Myrick were standing on a corner.

"And standing around is about all I've been doing the last year, Julia," Myrick had just pronounced. This with a restless lift of his good-looking young brown head. "This town isn't the largest place of opportunity in the world. I've been thinking, Julia—"

Julia interrupted dreamily, her glance down the street. "I've been thinking lately how much you look like your grandfather, Myrick. Even my sister Marian says you've got his forehead."

"Gramp's a good old scout," said Myrick carelessly. "But what I was saying was that Willy Marbury's going to New York next month. For good. He's got an uncle-in-law there. In some kind of mail order business."

"Yes. Grace Huck told me last night. She says it will take him three or four years likely to get a good start. She said she certainly isn't going to wait eight or nine years, though. Clerking here at home in Sobel and Pratt's!" Julia added somewhat irrelevantly, "Grace has a—not a very nice nose. And she doesn't take a good photograph."

"She's got a nose as big as our garage door," said Myrick promptly. "And I guess if she left off waiting, Willy could find a girl or two in New York to help him pass the time."

The day was warm. But Julia shivered just a little.

"Of course I've got no relations in New York—or Chicago either," sighed Myrick. "Nothing for a sort of objective point either."

"No, you haven't, Myrick," said Julia promptly. "And lots of people say the new interurban will boom the town."

"Oh, that boom!" He was restlessly scornful. "That's an old story. I've heard it since I was in second grade."

However, once or twice in the months that followed Myrick admitted, although he himself had brought the subject up, that his restlessness was not tangible as to aim. He'd like to make some spectacular venture, in brisk line with modern high-flying accomplishment, or big money. Quick big money. Or picturesque action.

There came a small flurry in county real estate and his father let him share one commission. The flurry subsided. His father grunted an unconcern based on experience and put in a new oak desk for his son anyhow. Myrick sat at it rather importantly and accepted blushing the ancient but reliable gold fountain pen which his grandfather insisted on his using. There were, of course, dances, joy rides and motion pictures to occupy the winter. Julia had a pink and gray evening dress and she dressed her daffodil colored hair a new way. In the spring the girls had a linen shower for her. Julia's sister Marian, married five years and not unhappily, advised her which linens were best for every day and which she might as well keep for company.

And at the end of that pleasant spring Pike Hoffman, in all innocence, returned to Ohiofield.

RETURNED is not the correct word. Pike came merely for a long delayed visit, a flying throwback to boyhood scenes. Partly for purposes of publicity.

"Wouldn't live in this burg again on a bet," he was heard saying decidedly to some one in the back seat even as his glossy patent leather foot projected over the running-board of his car.

He came unheralded in advance—the acclaimed absentee. In a lemon-yellow car as long as the Hoffman lean-to kitchen, as glistening as its owner's footgear. Its engine matched in vividity the black silk stripes of the champion's silk shirt. The shirt was in fashionable architectural harmony with the razor edge of Pike's expensive light tweed trousers. The trousers suited artistically the utterly correct Fifth Avenue flatness of his green-checked cap.

Like a sartorial and cylindric tornado, the lemon-yellow car streaked down Third Street one gaudy summer afternoon, Pike in the front seat, with a monogrammed cigaret screwed to one side of his loose mouth, recognizing old schoolmates before they knew him.

Accompanying him were his chauffeur, trainer, financial manager, a huge glossy assortment of bags and a Boston terrier with a button tail. In a lapis lazuli roadster which followed were two boon companions and a press representative with cameras and tripod. Pike himself had not changed much. He squinted a little through one light eye—that was (Continued on page 122)



By Alice M. Williamson

Sheiks

*I Have Met—in the
Desert and Elsewhere*

SINCE sheiks have become the fashion, I have often wondered whether the girls who thrill for them have ever encountered any genuine sheiks on their native sand. Then I tell myself that they haven't. If they had done so, they would promptly hasten back to the only sheiks who have thrills to give—the gorgeous, terrible, desperate, brutal, tender, utterly primitive sheiks of our Western world.

The truth about desert sheiks is—but I'm going to tell you my experience of them in Egypt, Palestine, Algeria and Tunisia.

When Robert Hichens wrote his wonderful novel, "The Garden of Allah," you felt you yearned to fly to almost any old desert and "give yourself" to it. Somehow it leaked out that the real name of Robert Hichens's desert paradise was Biskra; and Biskra became in winter a seething mob of terrible tourists. Ladies hoped that, if they went there, they might find sheiks; and indeed, one of the most important sheiks of the whole Sahara lives in Biskra. Being a prince, he is married to an Arab princess. She wouldn't tolerate an extra wife in the family—though by law Mohammedan men may have four at a time—even if her charming husband wanted another. This he is far from doing; and as for falling in love with any white-skinned woman who came to his part of the world hoping for the best, he could not be bothered with her. Neither he nor any of the great desert chiefs admire Western femininity half as much as their own beautiful dark women.

Alas, yes! there is no disguising the fact that a young Arab woman who is beautiful is almost more beautiful than anyone else; and she knows how to be attractive—devastatingly attractive. Her clothes are also far more interesting than ours, and in these days Arab girls of high birth, especially in Tunisia, are well educated as well as singularly, subtly intelligent. Why should their adoring husbands dash about the desert abducting white women? One fact is, they consider us inferior. Another is that

though they are brave men and fine fighters if fighting comes in their way, as a race they take love lazily.

My first experience with a desert sheik was in Palestine. I was married, but my husband wasn't with me at the time. I was very young and full of energy. Besides, I felt the "call of the desert" and when I found that I could with perfect propriety be personally conducted by a desert sheik and his men, I decided to go. There were supposed to be bands of robbers about, so the sheik got together quite a caravan of his tribesmen, and as I caught sight of my escort coming to meet me, I thought, "Here is Romance!"

Distance, however, in some ways had lent enchantment. The long cloaks and graceful head-dress of the desert men sitting their Arab steeds made pictures of them. But the sheik, who was about thirty, and of mild, pleasant features, had lost one or two front teeth. All his men had good features, though few were tall or strong-looking when you saw them off their horses.

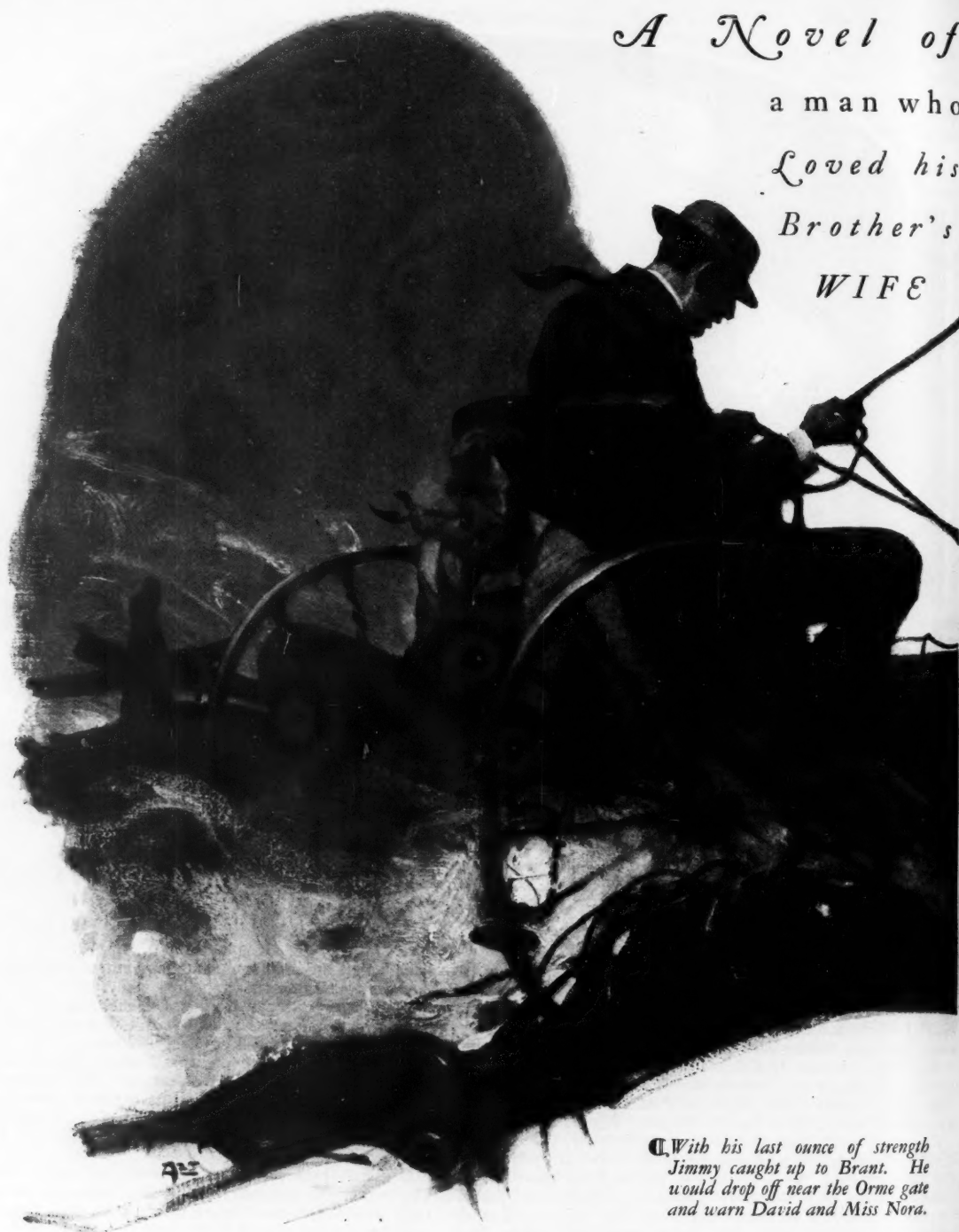
I had with me a French maid who could pass for a chaperon.

"Madame, prenez garde. Doubtless we are in danger," she warned me deliciously when the first night came and we made camp.

I soothed her by saying that our guide was a powerful sheik accredited by the government, who would be ruined for life if he yielded to dishonorable temptation. This was true; but how unlikely a man who didn't mind the absence of his front teeth would be even to feel temptation!

However, one day to please me in a most lonely and intriguing desert, the sheik got up a mock battle. The charge, which he led on one side, having picked all the best men for himself, was glorious to see, and I began to shut my eyes to the black gap between the dark lips. In fact, riding always by his side viewing his profile as our excursion progressed, I flirted a very, very little in a ladylike way and the best French (Continued on page 167)

A Novel of
a man who
Loved his
Brother's
WIFE



*With his last ounce of strength
Jimmy caught up to Brant. He
would drop off near the Orme gate
and warn David and Miss Nora.*

The Story So Far:

HANNIBAL ORME was like a twisted old pine tree that still somehow stands against the storms. Once he had been a rich plantation owner in South Carolina. Now, blind, deaf and half paralyzed, he had no money save a small bag which he kept gripped tight in his hand; and his plantation had gone to ruin. But he had developed the scent of a bloodhound and his arms still had the strength of an ox.

He had two sons as unlike as day and night. David was made of fine stuff. With his university education in agriculture, he could have gone far; yet because some one had to stay with his father, he stayed, and was little better than a slave, waiting on the helpless old man hand and foot. Nor was there any compensation whatsoever in the service. For Hannibal, who was by nature cruel and miserly, hated David. Only one thing could David do toward bettering himself—he developed a small patch

of long-staple cotton, the seed from which might some day lead him to fortune.

Brant, on the other hand, the old man loved. Yet Brant, handsome and dark and clever, was a born rascal. His money went on women, drink and gambling. He wasted his opportunities, and after each failure wheedled more money out of his father. But none of this did David let the old man suspect.

In order not to spoil the old man's last days, he lied about Brant's brilliant successes, and even wrote affectionate and encouraging letters which supposedly came from Brant.

One day Brant, who had recently "skipped" from the neighboring town of Balestier with a stolen automobile, telegraphed that he was married and was bringing his bride home.

David's sole companions, almost, had been the people of his dreams—especially the woman of his dreams. When he saw Nora, wistful and lovely, it is not to be wondered at that she seemed to him at once that woman. His chivalrous instincts, too,

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By Gouverneur MORRIS

The House of ORME

Illustrations by
James E. Allen



The Story Continues:

THEY had thought that it was merely a fainting spell, but it was the beginning of an illness. It was one of those wasting, wearing, unnamed illnesses that are so prevalent in fever countries. She was not sick enough to stay in bed, nor well enough to be up and about. But she would not have a doctor called.

"Life," she explained to David, "is the only doctor that can help me. If life would turn about face and take all the worry away and make me happy, I'd be well."

He had carried a big chair out on the back veranda and filled it full of pillows. She spent much of her time in it, and he and Jimmy took turns sitting on the top step and keeping her company. From the high veranda they could see over the garden wall and look out over the vast levels of old run-down cotton fields to a horizon of straight dark pines.

One day David told her about his experiments with cotton, and how he had at last bred a seed which would produce an upland cotton of longer staple than any other.

"If I had nothing to think about but money and getting on in the world," he said, "I'd ask nothing better than to walk out of Orme with that bag of seed over my shoulder. I'd turn away from the sea and walk inland; I'd keep

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were aroused by Brant's brutal attitude toward her, and by her story of the marriage—a quick wooing, based on Brant's belief that she had money. So when, on Brant's wedding night, the Sheriff came and took him away for the theft of the automobile, David was not in his heart wholly sorry.

Brant was sentenced to six months on a chain gang at hard labor. During that six months he became a festering mass of hatred; especially as his fellow convicts goaded him with unpleasant stories regarding Nora and David.

Between these two, however, there was no overt love-making. David did love Nora more every day; but he kept his feelings under iron restraint. And she had begun to love him.

And then they saw Brant for the first time since his imprisonment—on the road near Orme which the convicts were rebuilding. He was chained to a negro. When he saw them—Nora and David and blind old Hannibal—his hatred and suspicion burst out in short but burning words. And Nora, when she reached home, fainted.

It was Jimmy Crisp, a ne'er-do-well but likable boy from near-by, who caught her as she fell. Jimmy, David learned, had come to stay for a while, having been put out of his home. "Paw," he explained, "said the next time he got mad at me he'd made up his mind to stay mad. This here is the next time."

on walking all day, if I had to, and all the next day, until I came to a plantation where they were getting ready to plant, and getting ready right. I'd go to the owner and tell him about my seed. I'd ask him to let me plant as many acres as it would plant and give me a share in the crop. And suppose he didn't believe me, and wouldn't? Why then I'd just go on to the next plantation that looked right, or the next, until I found somebody that did and would."

Nora thought for a while, with a smile on her face. Then she said: "I wish I was a man and had a sack of magic cotton seed."

David laughed and said: "There are times, Nora, when great minds think almost alike. I wasn't exactly wishing that you were a man, but I was thinking that I could give you the seed with my blessing. I was thinking that you could be the one to walk out of Orme—only you wouldn't have to walk; you could have the old horse and the buggy—and Jimmy Crisp could pretend that he was your brother and go with you. You've a little money left, haven't you, Nora?"



C Nora and David had never spent a more miserable evening. And old Hannibal was obstinate and determined to sit up until Brant came home.

"A little, David," Nora answered. "Well—how about it? It will soon be time to plant. And Nora—seed or no seed, I've been thinking and thinking, and I've thought of things sideways and crossways and backward and forward, and I think you ought to walk out of Orme before my brother walks in. You were tricked into marrying him. That's no marriage. You have a right to your own life . . . Will you think over what I've said? I want you to go, Nora. I want you to go far, and I don't want to know where you go. I want to be able to say to Brant: 'She's gone. I don't know where she's gone, and I pray God that nothing I may ever say or do will ever help to find her.' Will you go?"

"David," she said, "why do you want so much for me to go?"

"That," said David, "is something I can't talk plainly to you about. But I'd rather see any sweet and good woman dead than made to belong to a man she doesn't love."

"David," said Nora, "I'd rather be dead than alive when Brant comes home. But I've helped you to take care of the old man, and hasn't it been easier for you to have me here? And how can I run away and leave you to bear everything—the silence and the loneliness?"

"Perhaps I wouldn't be so lonely," said David. "I would have memories. And besides, Nora, it wouldn't be for long—another year—two years. The old tree has been ready to fall for a long time now and nobody understands how it still manages to stand. You will go—won't you?"

She did not answer.

"Think about it then, Nora. Think about it from this point of view—that if you wish to escape you can—that you are under no obligations to Brant. We'll do everything that we can to build up your strength so that you'll be ready for the adventure. We would be partners. I the silent partner who grew the seed—you the active partner who sows it. It wouldn't be long before we had enough money to begin the rejuvenation of those old fields out yonder, and then we wouldn't have to share our profits with anyone. And remember, there was never any gold mine or oil well so sure as a cotton with a longer staple than other cotton."

"But I've never managed anything, David. I don't know anything about business. Suppose I failed."

"Wouldn't I be here raising more seed so that we could try again?"

"But what could we tell your father?"

"Things are getting so complicated that it looks to me as if father would have to be told sooner or later. He pretends to believe that all's well with Brant, but I think that he is beginning to suspect that all's not at all well. The moment Brant comes back and tries to get money out of him, he'll know. And all our fine fiction about how well Brant has been getting along will be found out. I'm beginning to wish that we hadn't lied. It would have been better to tell father the truth about Brant once and for all. But I couldn't bear to hurt him. And now I'm going to find Jimmy to keep

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you company. There's a pine that has to come down and be made into stove-wood."

He left her reluctantly, and after a while Jimmy Crisp came to take his place. Nora was reforming Jimmy. She observed that his hair was freshly wetted and slicked back, and she demanded to see his hands. Even his finger-nails were reasonably clean. She had delved somewhat deeply into Jimmy's life history, and felt a great compassion for the boy. He was without any inherent evil at all, but so weak of will and so admiring of those whom he believed to be his betters and his superiors that he was sure to take the color of the company he kept. It would have been easy to make either a pious choir boy of him or a pickpocket.

A childish hero worship for Brant had got him into much evil company and into many bad scrapes. He had thought it very mannish and grown up to smoke, and to have had headaches from drinking. He had served Brant with a blind devotion, carried his messages and run his errands. Even now though the hero was fallen and the idol shattered, there was still about Brant a glitter and a glamour. And given the opportunity Brant could still have demonstrated to the boy that black is sometimes white.

Was it not a proof of Brant's extraordinary qualities that of all the world he alone should have won Nora for his wife? Jimmy adored Nora. His mind was filled with imaginations about her. In these, and merely for the reward of the deed itself, he continually did her great services and effected rescues of her person from bandits, from lions, from invading armies, and always at the cost of his own life.

"Have you seen Brant today, Jimmy?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"You gave him my message?"

"I told him that you were sick and terribly sorry for him."

"What did he say?"

As a matter of fact Brant had said but one word—short and rough; but Jimmy chose to prevaricate.

"He said," said Jimmy, "he was sorry you was sick, and to give you his best—"

Jimmy was at an age when the word love is difficult to say. He made up some more messages.

"He said to tell you that he's doing as well as could be expected under the circumstances, and he's looking forward to bein' tu'ned loose so's he can come home."

It seemed to Nora that nothing ever reminded her of anything except of that awful home-coming. She closed her eyes with weariness. Presently she opened them. "Jimmy," she said, "I know that you love David, and my husband, and I think you're fond of me. I think you'd do a lot for me."

"Anything," said Jimmy, "anything at all."

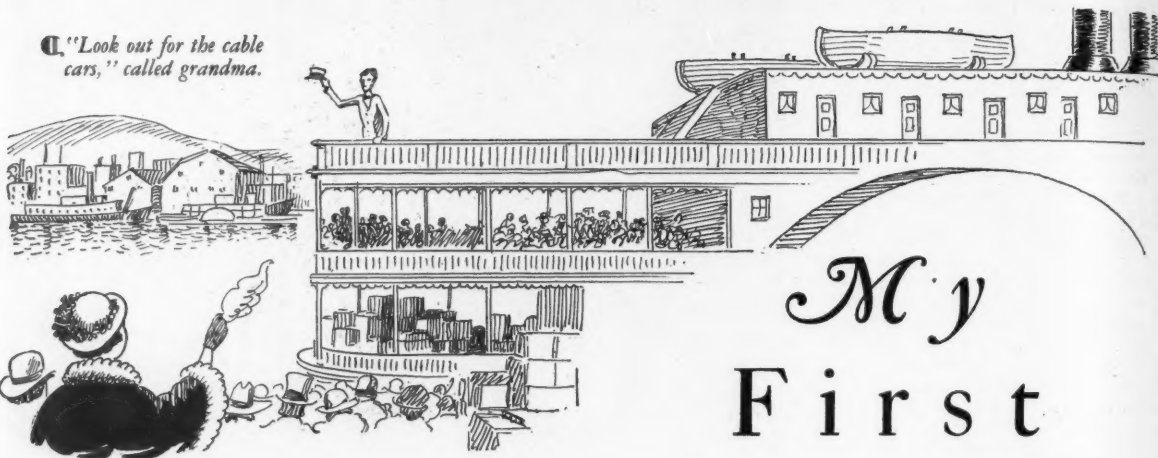
"Sometimes," she said, "they let prisoners out a little earlier for good behavior, and I wish I could find out if they are going to do that with Brant. I think we ought to try to have everything as nice (Continued on page 196)



Nora was so tired she no longer cared what became of her. "In the end," she said, "the watching and the waiting always falls on you, David."

B y O . O . M c I N T Y R E

"Look out for the cable cars," called grandma.



Illustrations by
T. E. Powers

My First Vacation

I WAS city editor of the Gallipolis, Ohio, Daily Journal when I took my first vacation from work. City Editor was a rather gaudy title. My job was to scamper up and down the main street to garner the homely personal items of a small town.

I also solicited advertising, set a little type, did shift duty turning the hand press and helped to wrap the mail. My salary was five dollars a week and two passes to all attractions at the Aerial Opera House.

With the aid of grandma and a China pig bank I had saved \$21.60 out of my first year's earnings. Peter McMullen, who owned the Journal, told me I needed a rest. I suspect he was thinking of his subscribers.

Grandma and I discussed vacation plans at great length. She was for my going out to Aunt Leonora Graham's farm, east of town. I was for traveling and seeing the world. So we decided on Cincinnati, about 200 miles away.

I made a grand editorial gesture over my departure. My "Purely Personal" column led off with this pompous conceit:

The City Editor of the Journal leaves Saturday for Cincinnati, where he will spend a week seeing the sights.

Before I left, "Sluggsy" Gorselene, of the job printing department, struck off some business cards for which I furnished the copy. They read:

O. O. McIntyre,
Esq.
City Editor
Gallipolis, O.,
Journal
"Have you an
Item?"



Vacations among the rich are to impress people who don't give a boot.

in the world. The Leviathan today appears a tug in comparison. She fairly blazed with light, life and color. As we neared the twinkling lights of small towns, the orchestra, consisting of a cornet, violin and harp, played popular airs.

Nowadays the most brilliant cafés in London, Paris or New York could not compare with my impression of that dining-room.



I even had a hair cut in the Arcade.

The clatter, strange faces and throb of the engines made me giddy. I was at the top of the world. Afterward on deck as we floated lazily along we could hear the negro roustabouts crooning their levee melodies. A fellow passenger—a city man from Pittsburgh—sat next to me.

"From Pittsburgh?" he asked.

"No," I lied

nonchalantly, lighting a rat-tailed stogie, "from New York." And it was from the metropolis I registered at the Palace Hotel in Cincinnati. A topsy-turvy world! Today I live in New York and register from my birthplace, Plattsburg, Missouri.

I have seen the lights of Paris in the falling dusk from the top of Montmartre Hill, New York's sky-line from an incoming liner at sunrise, and other entrancing vistas, but nothing yet has compared to my first glance at the Cincinnati levee—the row of suspension bridges, acres of dray horses tugging up the cobblestoned hill, the tower at Fort Thomas, Kentucky, and the coils of smoke from a hundred factory stacks.

What a vacation I had! I saw the Cincinnati Reds play the New York Giants. I saw the Roger Brothers in "In Havana." I had a shave and a hair cut in the glittering barber shop in the Arcade. I mingled with the crowds in Fountain Square. I saw a girl from Gallipolis who was singing in a beer concert hall.

I saw the waxed horrors in a Vine Street musée. I saw a comedian wearing green whiskers at the People's Theater hit his team-mate over the head with a mallet and toppled out of the seat laughing at the gallon of water that spurted in a tiny stream from his head.

I rode up to the top floor of the Traction Building in an elevator. I talked to Jimmy Widemeyer, the pugilist newsboy

of Government Place. I watched Boss George B. Cox at his famous round table in Weillert's Garden Over-the-Rhine. I traveled up in the almost perpendicular incline at Eden Park. I bought a revolving shirt front that could be turned to six different colors with a flip of the wrist.

I fed peanuts to the monkeys at the Zoological Garden. I applied for a job as a reporter on the Cincinnati Enquirer. I ate at the oyster bar in Opera Place. I pawned my silver hunting case watch on Central Avenue for a scalper's ticket home. But it was worth it!

More than twenty years have gone since that first vacation. The Journal is gone. Peter McMullen is gone. And the golden illusion of youth has vanished.

Today I take two vacations a year of about two months each—four months in all. Not one of these compares with that first vacation by a long, long shot. In fact in two or three days I usually find myself quite bored with it all.

I rarely read the social columns of a New York newspaper without reading something about like this:

Mr. and Mrs. Hadley Smythe sailed on their private yacht for Naples. They will visit Rome, go on to Deauville for the season and arrive in London for the tennis games. They expect to be away for six months.

This may excite the envy of many but it only excites my pity. It is a rignarole business—a paltry genuflection to swank. I think of the un-

ceasing whirligig of the squirrel in the revolving cage. The futile effort to flee from ennui. I think of the farmer in Maine who was going down to Bangor on a spree and "Gosh, how I dread it!"

Vacations among the very rich today are not so much for pleasure as to impress people who don't give a hoot anyway.

Mr. Mervyn Martyn goes to Scotland to open his shooting place. Mr. Mervyn Martyn—formerly Mel Martin of Deep Gap, Pennsylvania—cares just as much about shooting grouse as Paderewski would enjoy exchanging punches with Jack Dempsey. Mr. Martyn would rather follow a winding brook with an old-fashioned pole and line back home. He is paying one of the penalties of great wealth. He must follow the trail of the show-offs. His shooting lodge is something elegant to which to refer at his club.

Perhaps a trip on the Iron Queen to Cincinnati would bore me to extinction today, but I do not believe it would. As we grow older we discover that the memories standing out like clear-cut cameos are the simple, unaffected pleasures.

Most of us remember the pyramids and the bazaars of Constantinople in a blurry way. The peaceful picnic grove back home is etched in steel. This is not a plea for the simple life. It is a silent tear for more of the imperishable dreams youth gave us.

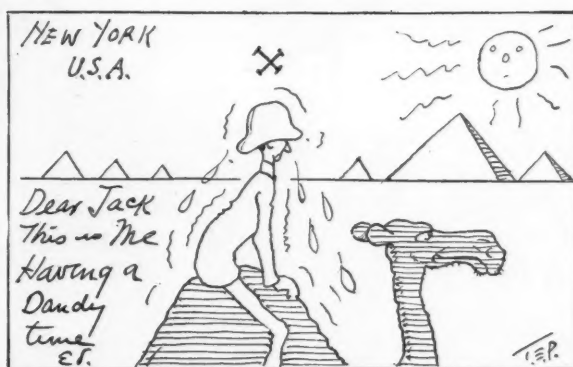
I am thinking of the three-day bicycle ride to Walker Springs—the early morning dew, the caroling birds, the farmers waving from the fields and the midday luncheon under a spreading oak.

Night in the open with a star-spangled sky, the melancholy hoot of the owls mingling with the cheerful chirp of crickets. The dying embers of a camp-fire.

And then contrast it with the seashore vacation of today with its stiffly starched routine, its board-walk promenade, its formal dinners and mighty effort to dazzle strangers who will never see you again.

I fear vacations are not vacations any more for the most of us.

They have gone the way of the street-corner medicine show and the county fair. Just pleasant memories of something we have lost.



☛ Paying one of the penalties of wealth.

One time as a reporter on a New York newspaper I asked one of the richest men in America to express his views on the ideal vacation for a symposium my paper was preparing.

He said he would like to travel with a knapsack afoot through a certain section of North Carolina.

He wanted to sleep where night found him. He wanted to cook his own meals, fish a little, hunt a little and get entirely away from people and the telephone.

SEVERAL weeks later I noticed he had thrown open a great mansion in Newport for the season and would entertain a score or more house guests. There would be grand lawn fêtes and gorgeous costume balls.

I am not inclined to believe he was insincere with me in our interview. He was merely caught in the merciless social net. He had to carry on.

We take life on the run, forgetting perhaps that real happiness is just a few steps around the corner.

Giant liners, freighted with brightly labeled trunks and folk from Fashion Row, shove off for Europe to the merry medley of sirens. Stenographers and clerks in down-town skyscrapers press their faces to the windows and sigh.

Their "two weeks in August" seem hapless makeshifts for a real vacation.

And yet these bored voyagers dash madly back to milk and rest cures to round into condition again.

I have often watched the Saturday half-holiday crowds in Central Park. They eddy over from the East Side tenements to this great breathing space so close to the city's heart-beat. Father in his shirt-sleeves contentedly stretched out under a great oak. Mother peacefully knitting. And their little brood scampering delightfully over the greensward.

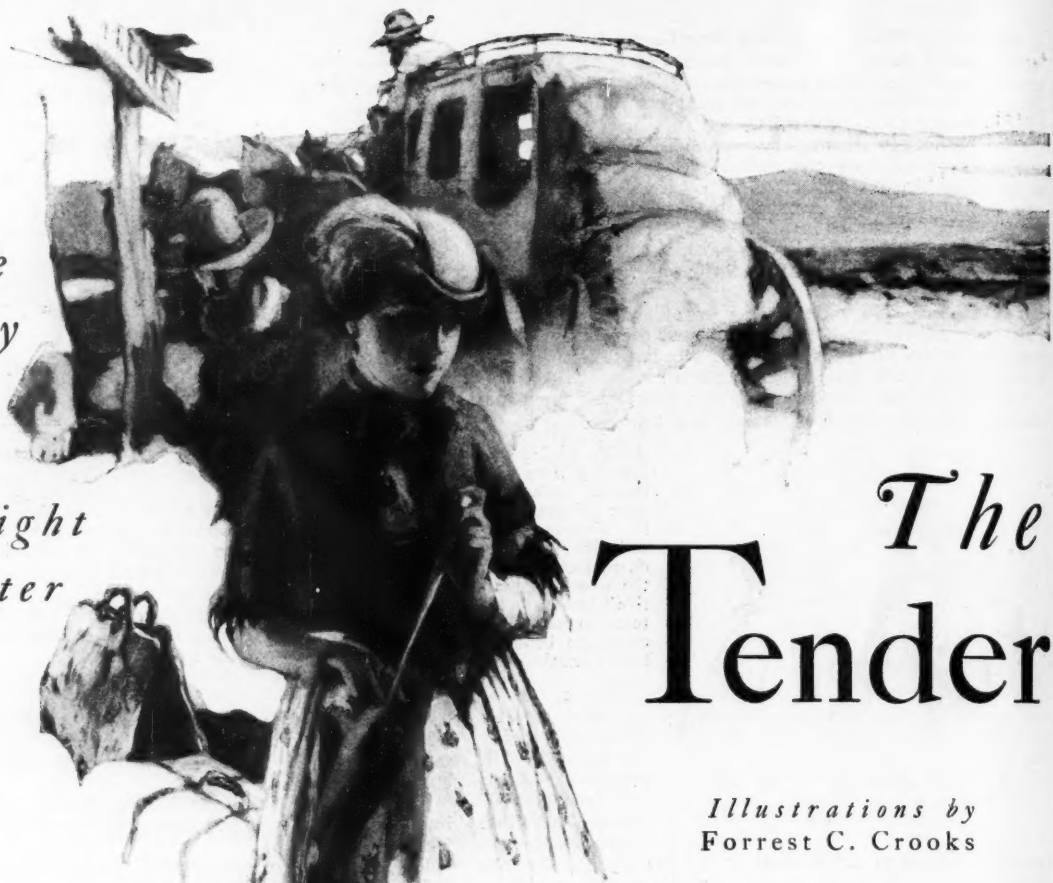
Then I think of the expression of tedious resignation you see on the faces of the fashionable crowds at the American and European watering places. Then again I wonder what constitutes a really happy vacation.

Anyway, I wish you a right merry one!



☛ Is he to be envied—or pitied?

*A
Love
Story
of
a
Straight
Shooter*



The Tender

*Illustrations by
Forrest C. Crooks*

ON THE last day of her long journey to Paradise Betty Ayres traveled by stage. It was late in the month of June and the weather was growing fervent. By the time they pulled into the San Pedro crossing for the change of horses and the midday meal, she had acquired for her first impressions of southeastern Arizona a background whose component elements were heat and dust, cactus and naked rocks, and a landscape of terrifying beauty.

She was picking at her dinner in the fly-specked dining-room of the stage station when the shotgun messenger and the new driver sat down at the table. With Illinois corn fields five days behind, she listened to these two begirt with deadly weapons, talking in an undertone of spavins and collar galls and the shifting of the ford this summer, until the depths of their unsociability left her thoroughly depressed. Then they fell into argument over the date of last autumn's big hold-up on the Benson road, and by way of clinching his contention:

"I know I'm right," the messenger maintained. "It was the day Curt Wilcox killed that man from Lincoln County."

That settled it so far as the discussion was concerned, and as for Betty, her impressions of southeastern Arizona were now established. During the long afternoon she sat alone within the lurching Concord wishing with all her heart that she were back in Galesburg.

Meanwhile the subject of the shotgun messenger's careless remark was riding into Paradise serenely unconscious of the part he had played in a young girl's thoughts. By the unkind workings of coincidence he reached the misnamed hamlet of sunbaked adobes on the mesa's edge just as the justice court was about to adjourn.

The court occupied the rear of old Beaver Smith's general store along with the whisky barrel, which latter institution had been the center of all civic activities since the town's beginning. Here, seated on a cracker box, with a volume of the Arizona territorial statutes on the counter at his left hand and at his right—conveniently within reach—the barrel's faucet, Beaver was

wielding the power of the low and middle justice with a splendid disregard for the formulas laid down in the yellow-backed book beside him.

The prisoner was standing up for sentence when Curt Wilcox joined the little group of spectators. There was something in that dark face which held his attention; in the eyes lurked an elusive resemblance which he could not place. Old Beaver tugged at his goat's beard as if he were jerking his words from his mouth.

"Which yo' bein' guilty as —, an' the' ain't no doubt on that there p'int, me, I am goin' to run yo' outa camp. It's fo' o'clock now. Ef yo' ain't gone by half past fo', this place is goin' to be plumb onhealthy fer yo'. Co't's adjourned."

"Where," Curt demanded of the storekeeper, who had already doffed his rôle of magistrate to serve the wants of a thirsting constituency, "did that half-breed come from?"

"Search me," Beaver replied. "All I know, he drifted into town a week or so ago, an' las' night Constable Tinkham caught him robbin' a Mexican. Why? What's wrong?"

"Nothing. But I have seen him somewhere before."

So it came that during the rest of the afternoon Curt was harking back over old scenes, recalling old faces, until the stage rattled in to interrupt his musings. The Concord came to a stop in the wide roadway with the store of Beaver Smith on one side and on the other Ma Smith's boarding-house. Its arrival was enough of an event to draw forth the men of Paradise from Beaver's store. The advent of a woman in the sunbaked hamlet was sufficient of a novelty to hold a majority of the spectators here for some time after Ma Smith had gathered Betty into her arms and taken her into the house. While old Beaver was superintending the Mexican who was bearing in the luggage, comment became general among the group before the store.

"I call her a cute little trick," said Broncho Bob Lee, whose unostentatious exporting business, carried on with pack trains from Chihuahua, was a mainstay of the community's prosperity.

Tinkham, his one-time partner, who had retired from the more strenuous activities of dealing with Mexican smugglers to hold down the office of constable, stroked his grizzled mustache.

"What I can't figger out," he drawled, "is how Beaver's breed carries any strain like that."

By *F. R. Bechdolt*



The face of the half-breed ceased to trouble Curt Wilcox; Betty had arrived in Paradise.

foot Girl

"She ain't no kin of Beaver's," Pony Deal enlightened him. "She comes from his ol' woman's relations up no'th som'ers. Her father died on her last winter an' she's goin' to live here."

So, in the lack of other topics, they were still talking at supper time. Curt Wilcox alone remained silent, but the face of the half-breed had ceased to trouble him. He lingered longer than any of his companions at the wash-basin behind the flat-roofed adobe house and when he entered Ma Smith's dining-room the meal was in full progress.

Broncho Bob Lee allowed his eyes to linger on him for some moments as he took his seat. "Hum!" he remarked gravely. "Neat but not gaudy. All that yo' need now is a shave an' a dress suit."

Betty, who had sufficiently recovered from her weary journey to help with the meal's serving, plucked her aunt by the sleeve in the kitchen doorway.

"Who," she demanded in a whisper, "is that nice-looking man who just came in? The one with the brown eyes?"

"That, honey," Ma Smith replied, "is Curt Wilcox." The sun and winds of many Arizona summers had stained her features; work and endurance had hardened them; but as she looked down at her niece, some of the harshness seemed to melt away.

"Curt Wilcox," the girl repeated. "It seems as if I'd heard that name before."

So the evening of their first meeting found these two with half formed memories which were, in their own time, to crystallize.

Most exalted among the household gods which Ma Smith had managed to enshrine within her home in spite of bad roads and the long haul from the railway, was her parlor organ. But beyond the reverence to which its rank as a piece of furniture entitled it, the instrument had thus far received no attention. The fondest dream of its possessor, whose calloused fingers had never touched one of those ivory keys save with a dust cloth, was of the day when she would sit in the stuffy little room, with her hands folded upon her lap, and listen to the playing of some gifted guest.

This evening she knew the dream was going to be realized, and she hurried through the pile of supper dishes with a vigor which

caused her husband, who was trying to read the weekly paper in the dining-room, to suggest that she expedite matters by taking an ax. In spite of her efforts, however, darkness had fallen before she was in the walnut rocking-chair, and Betty, who had twirled the horsehair stool to its proper height, was trying the first experimental chords.

"What would you like me to play, auntie?" the girl asked over her shoulder.

As the older woman's eyes rested on the young face with its unmarred softness and its delicacy of coloring like the petal of a blossom, a tenderness came into them. It vanished abruptly at the sight of old Beaver, who had scrambled from his seat in the dining-room.

"Give us 'Buffalo Gals,' " was his request, but the enthusiasm died from his voice when he met his wife's hard gaze and he slunk back to the Tombstone Epitaph. Ma Smith composed herself once more in her rocking-chair and clasped her hands upon her ample lap.

"Love's Old Sweet Song," she murmured. "Do you know that one, dear? I have been honin' to listen to it for years."

Betty nodded, and now for the first time the organ yielded melody. In the beginning she was content merely to play first one familiar air and then another, the while her aunt sat with clasped hands and rapture written on her features and old Beaver, who had deserted the weekly paper for good and all, stood in the dining-room doorway stroking his goat's beard. But when she came to 'The Old Oaken Bucket,' she found herself humming the refrain and soon afterward she was singing the words softly.

Half an hour or so later, when he had caught up his horse in the corral for the long ride back to the Double Dobe ranch, Curt Wilcox heard strains of music on the evening air and traced the sounds into the main street. He left his pony standing in the roadway and approached the boarding-house. The window was open; he halted just within the patch of yellow light and

gazed into the little parlor. From where he stood he saw the singer's face in profile. Her head was back; the lamplight made a nimbus of pale gold about the edges of her hair; the color which the weariness of the long journey had driven from her cheeks had now returned; he saw the long sweep of her lashes and the softness of her parted lips.

"I wandered today to the hill, Maggie,
To watch the scene below,
The creek and the creaking old mill, Maggie,
As we used to lo-o-ng ago."

There was a throatiness in her voice, a childish quaver which came out unexpectedly at times. The sunburned features of the watcher out there in the night lost some of their lean hardness.

She dropped her hands from the keys and let them rest on her lap. In a sudden fear lest he be discovered eavesdropping Curt stepped quickly to one side. His spur caught on some obstruction in the darkness and he cursed himself for his clumsiness. The sound brought Ma Smith to her feet and a flood of lamplight revealed him as she flung open the front door.

"Oh, it's you, Curt!" Her voice was cordial "Come in and set down with us."

She stepped aside to let him pass, but he halted on the threshold. His eyes were on the girl; and it occurred to her, as it had at supper time, how fine and bold those eyes were. Now a sudden diffidence brought to his cheeks a deeper flush than the sunburn. He was wondering with bitterness why he had not shaved today.

"This," Ma Smith was saying, "is Mr. Wilcox, Betty."

"Come on in, Curt," old Beaver bade him heartily, "an' listen to the music."

But the cattleman shook his head. "I reckon," was his lame excuse, "I have got to be shovin' on."

"Curt Wilcox," her aunt told Betty when he had gone, "is the finest man in this end of the country."

"An' the best man with a fo'ty-five," her husband was beginning enthusiastically when he caught her eye and fell silent.

After he had ridden out of town and was on the mesa with the yellow stars ablaze above him, Curt was humming softly to himself:

"I wandered today to the hill, Maggie,
To watch the scene below—"

The pony's ears went back and forth; he had heard his master singing many times in the long watches of the night, but the other airs had been livelier.



¶ "Love's Old Sweet Song," murmured Ma Smith. "Do

"What," one of the cowboys asked him the next morning, "is that there tune yo' are a-whistling, Curt?"

His employer ignored the question. "You boys," he said, "will have to look after things today. Me, I am ridin' into Paradise."

It was a good two hours before he was in the saddle. Shaving in cold alkali water was no light task in itself and it took considerable searching to bring forth the colored silk handkerchief which he knotted around his throat.

WHEN Betty saw him sitting among the men of Paradise at her aunt's table that evening, she noted these changes in his raiment but she gave no sign of it; the smile which she bestowed on him was as impersonally bright as those which the other guests received, no more so. Nor did she speak to Ma Smith of his presence.

After the dishes had been done, while the two women were sitting in the little parlor, his knock at the front door did not cause the younger one to turn her head. How was it then that the elder knew she was holding her face thus averted to hide the rising color? It had been many a year since Ma Smith's cheeks

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had felt a knowledge where he capturing evening b
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"Do you know that one, dear?" Betty nodded, and old Beaver deserted the weekly paper.

had felt any such warmth as that; yet she did know and the knowledge made her eyes grow tender. From the dining-room where he was poring over the Tombstone weekly in the hope of capturing some elusive item which might have escaped him the evening before, old Beaver heard the newcomer's voice.

"Say, Curt," he called, "yo' know that half-breed that I run outa town. Well, Tinkham says—"

"Did I tell yo' to fetch that pickled pork over from the store," his wife demanded, "or didn't I?" There was that in her tone which sent him forth in silence on the errand. When he had got as far as the back door she overtook him.

"Yo' say another word about runnin' men outa town or fo'ty-fives an' I'll make yo' wisht yo' was born dumb," she assured him through clenched teeth.

"Why," he protested, "whassa matter?"

"Cain't yo' see?" she hissed. "She's scared to death of this kentry right now. She's been raised religious an' she's dead set again sech things as gun plays. It's goin' to take some time to change her notions, an' I don't aim to have yo' go to sp'ilin' everything by any fool talk." With that she left him and when she returned to the little parlor the glint had departed from her eyes; the rasp was gone from her voice.

One evening he rode into Paradise with the news that the pony's education had been completed; but before he announced his tidings, he stopped at the store and beckoned the proprietor away from the group about the whisky barrel.

"She's here," Old Beaver closed one eye stealthily. "Come on the stage this afternoon." He hauled forth a new side-saddle.

"Jest keep it cached here," Curt bade him, "an' don't say anything to the womenfolks. I'll fetch the pony in tomorrow."

Some hours later, having closed his establishment for the night, Beaver stepped forth in time to see two figures standing in the doorway of his home outlined against the yellow lamplight.

"Curt," he told himself, "is as swift a hand at co'tin' as he is at gun fightin'."

Betty's admirer had taken his reluctant departure from the front door and was mounting his horse beside the hitching rack when he caught sight of the Justice of Peace crossing the street. At that moment, apropos of nothing, his memory seized upon the thing for which he had been groping during the past few days.

"Oh, Beaver," he called, and his

"Set down," she bade the guest. "Betty was jest going to sing for me."

He took the chair in silence. Old Beaver's speech had reawakened the memory of that dark face, and for some time it persisted in annoying him. During the intervals while the girl was not singing, the task of carrying on the conversation fell to Ma Smith; until the opening of the back door announced the arrival of her husband with the pickled pork and she departed, leaving them together. Then by an effort Curt put the half-breed from his mind, and when his hostess returned an hour later, the organ was silent; the only sound within the little parlor was the murmur of the two voices.

"Oh, auntie"—there was eagerness in Betty's utterance—"Mr. Wilcox says that he can get a horse for me to ride!"

"The's a sabino pony that the boys can gentle for side-saddle in a day or two, I reckon," Curt added diffidently.

It struck Ma Smith then that she had never known how handsome he really was.

Riding homeward that night Curt found the vision of the half-breed's face an unwelcome lodger which persisted in coming between him and his thoughts of Betty. During the next two days, while he was attending to the gentling of the sabino horse, there were intervals when he would catch himself muttering, "Where in the blazes have I seen that fellow, anyhow?"

(Continued on page 116)
85

By MARY
ROBERTS
RINEHART

A
Novel
of a
House Where
Ghosts
Walk

Illustrations by
W. D. Stevens



The RED

GHOSTS walked in the main house at Twin Hollows, mysterious apparitions were seen in the lighthouse, lights appeared on the marshes, and the red lamp, which had been locked away securely, was seen burning night after night in the library. The countryside was athrill with superstition and fear, for a series of terrifying crimes, beginning with wholesale sheep killing and ending with murder, had baffled the ingenuity of all detectives—professional and amateur.

Professor William Porter, who owned Twin Hollows and had rented it to Mr. Bethel, a half paralytic old scholar, and his secretary, Gordon, had accidentally become involved. Circumstantial evidence was against him and Greenough believed him guilty.

Warren Halliday, who was in love with Porter's niece Edith, was spending all his time in an effort to solve the crime, both because he wanted to clear Edith's uncle of suspicion and because he hoped to win the large reward so that he could afford to marry. He for a time suspected Gordon of the crimes. He knew that Gordon went out clandestinely at night, that he kept a notebook in cipher, that at one time he had had a knife and a coil of rope in his room.

86

The Story So Far:

Against this was the fact that Gordon himself had once been knocked unconscious and tied in the same fashion as one of the murdered persons. Old Mr. Bethel afterward admitted that he had knocked out Gordon with a poker, but who had tied him? The paralytic was unable to do that.

Professor Porter at times suspected Doctor Hayward. The Livingstones—especially Mrs. Livingstone—inclined toward a supernatural explanation. Uncle Horace Porter, who had died in the house under peculiar circumstances, she said had "come back." In support of this she cited the unfinished letter he was writing when he died, which referred to "danger" and "the enormity of the idea," and threatened the addressee with the police if he attempted to carry out his "plan."

Annie, the servant at the main house, said there was bad blood between Gordon and Mr. Bethel, and that the two quarreled violently. Porter was debating as to whether he should warn Bethel that he was not safe with Gordon when, happening to answer the telephone at the lodge, he heard the sounds of a terrific struggle in the main house, which was on the same telephone line. He hurriedly called Halliday, and the two rushed to the main house. They found neither Gordon nor Bethel, only the marks of a struggle and Gordon's packed suitcase, evidently left behind him in his haste to get away after the murder.

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Halliday for some reason is afraid for me. And the same, I think, is true of Edith.

the thing that, according to Halliday, saved me from being sent today to some sanctuary for the mentally deranged.

It showed unmistakable signs of entirely human investigation. At least a hand with the usual equipment of thumb and fingers has left more than one impression on it . . .

Later: And now where are we? I am willing, even anxious, to accept Halliday's verdict, that the sounds we both heard in the library were due to an east wind blowing down the chimney, plus the settling and creaking of the old portion of the house.

But we have just returned from an inspection, in broad day, of the marks outside the boarded-up window of the den.

There is a complete imprint of the hand on it, and it shows a broad short thumb and a curved little finger. What is more, there is a complete absence of the usual whorls and ridges of the ordinary hand. One could take this imprint and put it side by side with the one in the bowl of putty. They are identical.

Halliday seems to have seen a great light from somewhere, but to me the situation is as absurd as it is maddening. It is as outrageous as that, out of

some forgotten corner of my memory, I should have dug up a triangle within a circle, to find it cropping up soon after as the signature to a crime.

August 25

Five days have passed since the murder, and we are apparently as far from its solution as ever.

What work is being done is now centering about the county detective bureau in the city. A deputy constable keeps up a more or less casual surveillance of the property during the day, but is careful to depart before twilight. The dragging of the bay has once more been stopped, and Benchley's idea of an unknown enemy of Bethel's has apparently been abandoned in favor of Gordon as the killer.

At the same time we are not without developments of a sort.

Although he is reticent on the subject, Halliday seems to feel that the experiment the other night, incomplete as it was, negatives the theory that the man I saw escaped by the broken window in the library.

"Then where did he go?" I asked.

"That's the point," he said. "Where did he go? When we've answered that we'll have answered a number of things." But he tells me, surprisingly enough, that he has taken up a



LAMP

Neither was Bethel's body found; the murderer had probably taken it away in a car and thrown it into the bay.

Halliday made a careful analysis of finger-prints and other clues in the library, and then asked Porter to make an experiment there at night by the light of the red lamp. Suddenly Porter's foot caught in the cord attached to the lamp, and pulled out the plug from the socket.

In the darkness he could hear something at the window above him trying to get in. He listened a minute to the blind and dreadful groping, then as the shutter was shaken violently, he leaped into the hall and screamed:

"Halliday! Halliday!"

The Story Continues:

HHE CAME down-stairs; rather he leaped down the stairs. He says he found me in a corner, gibbering, and I dare say he did, but I must have told him with sufficient clearness, at that, for he left me alone again in that horrible place and ran outside. And as I had no intention whatever of being left alone again for the remainder of my life, I ran also. There was nobody outside the window, but the fresh green paint was

sort of temporary residence in the house.

"Whoever tried to get in the other night may come back again," he says. And assures me that the place isn't so bad "when one gets used to it."

"I read Kant," he says, as if that explains something.

I have offered to stay with him, but not, I dare say, with any enthusiasm. But he declines with a smile.

"You are too psychic, Skipper!" he says.

But it is perfectly evident that he does not want me.

This morning, going unexpectedly into the boat-house where this conversation took place, I found him sitting by his table, and spread out before him the bit of linen, the cipher, the broken lens and the top of the ether can which constituted our various exhibits before I was gently eliminated from the case. But he also had a box of figs and a hand mirror before him, and when I entered unexpectedly he was studying himself in the glass.

As HE immediately asked me if I cared to go fishing, which I did not, I saw that he was not prepared to make any explanation . . .

The other development, although it does not solve the crime or touch on it, came to me through Lear today, and throws a new and interesting light on poor old Bethel himself.

Lear did not like his errand; he prefers a presumptuous skepticism to an irrational credulity and knows no middle ground. Those things which lie beyond his understanding he refers to as "poppycock,"

a favorite word of his. And today he prefaced his business with a small lecture on me, taking me into the drive to deliver it.

"You don't look like a man who has been on a vacation," he began, surveying me. "I know you've had a bad time, but after all, it's no possible responsibility of yours."

"I rented him the house. And I knew I had no business to rent it to anybody."

"Poppycock!" he said, and cleared his throat.

He had fallen into step with me, but at that he stopped and faced me.

"Now see here, Porter," he said, "there's a good bit of talk going around. Some of your friends are saying that you and Jane are laying the blame on some darn fool nonsense about the house itself. That's poor hearing, and it's ridiculous into the bargain. The Morrison girl was not killed in the house."

"I'm not so sure she wasn't. At any rate, *he* was. And I believe the same hand killed them both."

"But a human hand, of course? You're not going to say—"

"Oh, I admit that," I said. "But there are a lot of curious things. If you think the house is normal, spend a night there."



Question: "Doctor Hayward was on the road; you were

"Normal!" he snorted. "Of course the house is normal. It's the people in it who aren't." And warming to his subject: "You and Cameron should be locked up together. And Pettin-gill," he added.

Which brought him to Cameron, and his errand . . .

Immediately on Cameron's return from the Adirondacks he had gone to bed with an infected hand, which had been torn by a fish-hook, and had been too ill to look at the accumulation of mail. But the day before, although still very weak, he had gone through his letters, and there found one from Mr. Bethel, dated late in July.

In this letter Bethel recited various "abnormal conditions" in the Twin Hollows house, and asked Cameron, at the earliest possible moment, to go out and investigate them.

"And he wants to come?" I asked Lear.

"I tell you he's been sick," Lear said impatiently. "He wants to know about showing it to the police. He doesn't want to be dragged in, if he can help it."

"You've seen it?"

"Yes. There's nothing in it except what I've told you."



close to the house. Yet when he reached you, you had only found this boy. Is that correct?"

"He doesn't describe these abnormal conditions?" I asked. "No. But he said he had made some experiments of his own, and was anxious to have his results verified."

"Experiments? Using a red light?"

"He didn't say," Lear said, with some asperity. "A red light! What in heaven's name has a red light to do with the immortal soul?"

HE ENLARGED on that, savagely. Helena, he said, had been off in a corner saying "Om, Om," to herself half the summer, and when she dozed off in so doing, would waken to claim that her astral body had been off on some excursion or other.

"I can't appeal to her reason," he said, with a shrug of his thin shoulders, "but I have appealed to her decency. I've asked her if it is fair to intrude on the privacy every human individual is entitled to at times. But it's no good. She keeps a record, and I'm convinced it would jail her."

The only advice I could send Cameron was to use his own judgment concerning the letter.

For myself personally, I do not see what value it has, save to corroborate my own ideas concerning the house.

But at least it has suggested to me the advisability of asking Cameron to come here quietly and look the place over.

I rather think he wants to do so.

AUGUST 26

All along, I have been impressed by the attitude of at least the summer public to our tragedies; as each one came it brought with it its temporary thrill; for a moment, one might say, the dancing stopped and a bit of drama was enacted on the stage. Then the curtain fell, the band struck up, and the whirl began again, with an inconsiderable number of the dancers missing.

Poor Carroway's widow is working at one of the shore hotels, and has bobbed her hair. And a small boy with adenoids delivers our milk and chickens; I caught him this morning chalking up a triangle within a circle on one of the pillars of the gate.

The main house shut and empty, a new assistant keeper at the lighthouse, and perhaps a closed room and grief at the Morrison farmhouse—these are the only apparent scars left, to mark our summer's wounding.

I saw Larkin this morning. He believes that we may be able to sell the property as a hotel site; as this would ensure destroying the house, it seems the best thing that can be done.

But one other change I have not recorded.

Watching Halliday as I do, affectionately and not too openly, I can see a very considerable change in him. He is like a man lighted from within by some flame, of vengeance perhaps, of resolution certainly. And he is moody at times; his old gaiety is gone. He has put me out of his confidence; not because he does not trust me, but because for some reason he is afraid for me. And the same, I think, is true of Edith in the last day or two.

It is as though he said, in effect:

"Keep out. It is dangerous. I am willing to take a chance, but I want to know that the rest of you are safe."

Now and then, however, I gather something. Thus yesterday he said: "You have to remember this: we are not dealing with a criminal, but with an idea."

Again, he has asked me for Uncle Horace's letter, and has been apparently making a study of it.

Only along the lines of what I call the supernormal phenomena of the summer does he show his old openness, and there he is frankly puzzled. My decision not to call in Cameron has, I think, disappointed him. But my (Continued on page 177)



Belle Livingstone
makes friends with
a Japanese baby

WHEN I arrived back from Monte Carlo, the London workmen were already transforming the gray, somber city for the coronation of King Edward VII, and it was evident the crowning of so popular a bohemian as Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, was certain to make the season of 1902 a memorable one.

The house I had taken was a sixteen-room one at Knightsbridge, on the site where the Harrods store stands. It had a pillared front and lovely reception room, and was admirably arranged for entertaining. My house immediately became a regular meeting place for exactly the same host of friends—except that they had now considerably increased in number—as my old rooms at the Walsingham had been.

My English friends laughed, of course, at our Boston baked beans and called the corn bread "chicken food" and lemon pie cheese cake; but I don't believe they found my luncheons as bad as they

The Autobiography of "The Most

pretended, or they would not have been found every Sunday hovering around the cocktail shaker, instead of doing church parade in the Park.

At one of these Sunday luncheons we were talking of crowns and coronations, which was the all-absorbing topic at that time. I must have been thinking of Fanny Ward's marvelous tiara, and I remarked that I should never be happy until I had one like hers.

I never gave my extravagant wish a second thought, but either the dramatic fervor I threw into my statement or the despondent sigh which followed it so affected the youthful son of a well-known peer who was listening that the very next morning I had my wish gratified. The youngster must have been at the jewelers' before the shops even opened, I thought, for the box containing the marvel of exquisite splendor was on the table beside my bed before I had awakened.

When I found what the package contained, I leaped out of bed and, before the glass in the privacy of my dressing-room, I posed with the tiara on my head and tried the effect from every angle.

I ate my breakfast with the beautiful thing on my head and spent the rest of the day admiring myself in it.

Eventually Lord Athlumney arrived, the first of those who came in for tea. Taking another look at myself in the glass, I flew down to meet him.

"Have you seen my wonderful present?"

"I don't see how anyone could help it," he retorted, "unless they were blind!"

From his sharp tone I knew that he had brought all his "don'ts" with him.

"You *don't* wear such elaborate tiaras except at Court. You *don't* accept such presents from anyone but a father or a husband. You *don't* look dowager enough yet!"

"Oh, that!" I cried, realizing that it was the only "don't" I could accept; "that will be all right, for I shall grow in stateliness if the years are as malignant to me as to most people."

But Jim was not smiling that afternoon, and he added gravely: "If you don't return it, I shall no longer be your big brother!"

That was the last and most crushing "don't." I deeply appreciated the interest this handsome Guardsman had taken in me, and I valued his friendship more than any diamond crown, so I took it off immediately and laid it on a near-by table. Shortly after, one of the servants brought me a note which I found to be from the

peer's mother's lawyers. It stated that the tiara which lay on the table before me was the property of the Duchess of X, and would I kindly let them know when they could send for it?

The boy, knowing the enormous amount of jewels his mother had, no



Mementoes of Belle Livingstone's world-wide travels.

BELLE LIVINGSTONE, *who was called* *Dangerous Woman in Europe*"

doubt thought she could afford to dispense with a tiara or so, and afterwards went so far as to tell her of his generosity. I have not given his name, because he was one of the first to fall when the "contemptible little British Army" went to meet the foe, and he was mentioned in dispatches for the glorious fight he and his men put up.

THE time was now drawing near for the coronation, and one morning a large cart filled with red roses drove up to my door, and the men said they had been sent to decorate the house. I protested that there must be some mistake, but they showed a paper on which was written my address, and insisted on beginning the work. Soon a curtain of roses covered the front of the house from roof to basement. The effect was beautiful in the extreme.

Hardly had it been finished, however, than the news came that the coronation had been postponed, as the central figure of all the festivities was about to undergo an operation for appendicitis. All the joy was taken out of the crimson and gold that adorned every doorway.

Once the King's health was reestablished and the crown was safely on his head, the Pleasure God resumed his sway. Everything in London went with a whirl that year. George Edwardes gave the most charming suppers in the Pinafore Room at the Savoy. Hector Tenant, of the Empire Theatre, gathered his talent around him and gave marvelous entertainments.

Lord William Beresford gave a party for the King, to which Elsie Fay and myself were invited. I do not think the King could have laughed more at our respective efforts had he tried. Shortly after this the Duchess of Manchester gave a small supper for the King and asked me to come and tell some of my coon stories. I learned that night, I think, who had covered my house with roses, for the King told me that he had heard my



place looked very beautiful. The amused twinkle in his eyes led me to believe he knew more than I did as to whence those roses had come.

It had never occurred to me at this time that I should not always ride on the crest of the wave. As a matter of fact at that very period my star was not merely waning but was crashing through space.

I had no suspicion of coming disaster until I began to hear ugly rumors concerning the Great Fingal mine, an Australian property in which, on the advice of some of my City friends who had been interested in launching it, I had bought \$75,000 worth of stock, representing one-half of my original fortune. The stock was at that time one of the soundest investments that could be found, and paid enormous dividends.

But now it was suddenly not worth the paper on which the certificates were printed. In his haste to get rich quick, the secretary of the company had issued an enormous number of forged shares and pocketed the money that was paid for them. My shares, alas, formed part of this little lot.

After my losses at Monte Carlo and the reckless manner in which I had been spending my income, I found myself in a very tight corner.

Frank Roudesbusch, Dick Dickinson and Lawrence Goldstone, one of the Great Fingal engineers, who called on me on the day when I knew the worst had happened, expected to find me in the depths of despair, instead of which I came downstairs singing. I knew Goldstone, who had advised the investment, must be feeling it, while Dickinson had lost his all, and great breezy Frank with the heart of gold must be sharing our trouble, so why should I make matters worse by adding my tears?

The news of my disaster quickly spread, and throughout the afternoon hansoms kept setting down fresh relays of sympathizers. There was still plenty of champagne in the



Ⓐ Above: Lady Curzon, wife of the then Viceroy of India. Below: A gorgeous bit of the Durbar.

cellar, and, ordering some to be served, I went to the piano, where I sang a song I used to sing in America, called "Push dem clouds away." Soon we had shoved ours behind us, and that evening some twenty of the jolliest people you could find dined together at the old Café Royal. Under the influence of this gathering I received a proposition that gave my life a new and unexpected twist.

Any amount of schemes had been put forward to help me get on my feet again. A "whip round" was proposed for my benefit. A big stockbroker offered to "carry me over" if I heard of a good speculation. Another offered to stake me to a large tea-room in the City, while a third offered to buy me the hotel which is now the Dysart, and turn it into an American hotel. Yet another suggested buying me the Royalty Theatre and seeing me back behind the footlights again.

Two bachelors, feeling that if the worst came to the worst they would sacrifice themselves, proposed marriage. Everyone sang the Wedding March from "Lohengrin," and we all stood up and drank the health of the two dare-devils.

In the calm that followed I dropped a suggestion which led to a solution of the problem. After, of course, saying how touched I was by such genuine evidence of friendship, I said that although I had managed to keep afloat pretty well in my own erratic way since I had left Chicago, I felt still too young to do any of the things that had been proposed, but that I was ready still to take more chances in life.

"Just look at my experience here in London," I continued. "I came here as a complete stranger, but I have not been able to spend the greater part of my own money, which I should still have if it had not been taken from me by a crook. Jewels, laces, horses—every kind of gift has been showered upon me without my asking for a thing, and often by people I have scarcely known. Why, I feel so sure of myself that I believe I could go round the whole world with a five-pound note and come back without owing a penny!"

"I've got it!" shouted Charlie Ansell, above the din that followed. "I'm willing to bet five thousand pounds [\$25,000] that Belle, starting from London with a five-pound note, can make her way round the world, picking up her traveling and hotel expenses as she goes, and come back with her fiver!"

"That's a 'cert'!" everyone said at once. "Nobody here would take that bet!"

Ansell laughed. "Then here is what I propose," he went on.

"I am willing to give Belle five pounds and drafts for a total of five thousand pounds, which she can cash at any time on her journey if she really needs to; but if she returns with the drafts uncashed, I will make her a present of the money!"

"Done!" I cried.

Mr. Ansell's proposition set the whole party buzzing like bees. When they found I was ready to take up the wager, however, they at once began to propose the conditions of the contest. Some of these I accepted and some I would not. Eventually the following eight conditions were duly set down on paper, in duplicate, and signed by myself and all the others present:

I was to make the trip on \$25 and my wits.

I was not to tell anybody, for the purpose of creating sympathy, that I was traveling on a bet.

I was not to borrow any money.

I was not to show the drafts to anybody.

I must take a lady companion with me, who must occupy the same cabins and rooms as myself.

I was not to earn money by singing or playing the piano.

I was not to appear in tights or in "*poses plastiques*."

Finally, I was not to accept any serious employment, journalism excepted.

My own copy of these conditions, which I kept as a souvenir, was torn up a few years later by my jealous American husband, but that night, as I put it into my purse, my whole being was singing. The wanderlust was again upon me and I was longing to be off. Hands across the table wished me luck, and with my thoughts across the sea, I left the party.

My preparations took less than a week. May Jerome, a woman friend who had just had her happiness wrecked by an unfortunate marriage and who was obsessed by the idea that there was no other man in the world for her, suggested making the trip with me, and I arranged for her to go as my companion, as stipulated by the articles I had signed.

There was an uproarious farewell supper the night before our departure, and afterwards the austere English wives who were present became so boisterous that they even vied with the men in pouring champagne over my trunks. I have never seen my English women friends so joyous as they were on the eve of my leaving London. When we crossed hands and sang "Auld Lang Syne," the only dry eye in the place was my own.

The next day was Sunday, and most of the friends who had been present at the farewell supper went to see us off. Flowers and fruit were showered upon me, and Edward Fitzgerald, the famous mountaineer, slipped into my hand a beautiful flexible gold purse, filled with sovereigns and made-so-as to be worn as a belt. Inside was his card, on which was written, "In case of need."

The best part of my solitary five pounds I spent on my ticket to Paris, which I had decided was the place to make for first, and as the train pulled out, amid deafening farewell cries, I settled down to plan how I could live on my wits when I got there.

By the time the French coast was reached, my plan of campaign, so far as the first steps were concerned, was laid out, and my companion, May Jerome, found me a much more agreeable fellow traveler during the rest of the journey to Paris than at the outset. As a matter of fact she wanted cheering up much (Continued on page 204)



CL. L.

CJ. O. C.

I HAVE just returned from a week's visit with James Oliver Curwood at his cabin in the forest near Roscommon, Michigan. We planned a fishing expedition, but the weather was so cold that, as Roy Howard said, all the trout in the Au Sable River were "in conference."

Which sounds as if we were disappointed. The sound is incorrect, for we never had a better time. When we weren't pitching horseshoes, playing poker or baseball, we sat by a roaring fire and discussed Jim Curwood's new novel.

What a story it is! A romance of the 1750's in Quebec. The most picturesque time in the history of the most colorful spot on the American Continent. Elegant gentlemen of New France, redskins that made scalping an art, sure-aimed woodsmen, beautiful women, crafty schemers—you meet them all in THE BLACK HUNTER which begins next month. If you feel about them and their story as I do, you will envy me the fact that I not only have read the story but have heard its author tell where he got all the amazing facts he has woven into the novel. [R. L.]

A Chin

He Loved to Touch

An
Easy Exercise
In
Laughter

Illustrations by
J. W. McGurk



"I didn't order you," says the gentleman of the new school to Ben. "I never begin a meal with cheese."

GOOD evening, friends of radio land, this is station B L A H, the Hotel St. Moe, New York, Gladys Murgatroyd on the air. Stand by for a moment and get a load of this bed-time story; really, it's the oyster's ear-phones!

Once upon a time a red-blooded Nordic frequently called Lord Lansdowne, as that was his name, snatched up a pencil, seized a piece of paper and dashed off the following thought for today:

Fate holds the strings and men like children move!

Well, when he added up matters and got the above total, the noted Lord knew his oil! Personally, I'm satisfied that destiny has not only got a keen sense of humor, but is also a fearful practical joker. It makes great men out of fools and fools out of great men. It watches with a sarcastic grin while we make our plans and build our hopes and then with a raucous hee-haw it knocks 'em for a goal. In turn it's playful, vicious, kind, brutal, generous, miserly or what have you? We, who don't know what it's all about, usually mistake what we call "luck" and "coincidence" for fate. As with Ben Warren and Bad News Nevins, for instance. Tune in, boys and girls, and catch this on your loud speakers!

A couple or three months ago I was returning to New York from the great open spaces of Hollywood where men are extras. With me on this voyage from the land of Escrow was my beautiful roommate, Hazel Killian, and a bevy of exceedingly close friends. Their names in round numbers were Ben Warren, Jimmy Clinch, Jerry Murphy and Pete Kift.

Me and Hazel occupied a drawing-room on the train and our friends were parked in another one. A fortunate investment in live stock at Tia Juana—the races—accounted for our traveling in such a costly way, as we were by no contortion of the imagination an ensemble of millionaires. On the contrary! I was a telephone operator; Hazel, a struggling young movie actress; Ben Warren, a heavyweight boxer; Jimmy Clinch, his manager; Jerry Murphy, a hotel detective; and Pete Kift, a captain of

bell-hops. Nothing there to set the lake ablaze, but regular people, really!

A fight with one Bad News Nevins, a leading contender for the heavyweight championship, was bringing Ben Warren and his manager back East. Hazel was returning to play a principal rôle in the film classic, "The Girl from Gehenna." As for your little girl friend, the man-mountain Jerry and the wise-cracking Pete—we were hoping to get our old portfolios back at the Hotel St. Moe, the most fashionable Broadway hostelry that ever ducked a padlock.

Well, to make a long story interesting, we hadn't left the Los Angeles city limits—which is about Albuquerque, New Mexico, if you believe the Auto Club signs—when grief arrived in our midst. Dying of thirst, Jerry and Pete prowled through the train trying to promote and in the club car they ran down a couple of affable anti-prohibitionists. When my playmates had been gone for an hour, I sent Ben Warren and Jimmy Clinch to bring them back, as I knew what the current Volstead antidote did to them. Fun's fun, but I had no craving to bound around with a set of inebriates.

Ben and Jimmy found our friends in a stud poker conflict with the two Samaritans and the first thing they knew they were buying chips themselves. The next time me and Hazel saw any of them was at Williams, Arizona, where the two strangers laughingly checked out. By an odd coincidence, the combined bank roll of our four stalwart escorts went with them.

"Them babies prob'ly got off to blow the post-office safe at this slab!" says Pete Kift feelingly, staring gloomily over the rail of the observation car.

"We should of listened to that Pullman conductor," sighs Jimmy Clinch. "He told us them gals was sharp-shooters."

Jerry Murphy grunts disgustedly. "Quit squawkin'—you're all drenched!" he remarks. "I admit they outsmarted us and made us like it, but they was no robbery committed. Willie Hoppe was a champ all them years because the guys he went

against played Hoppe and Hoppe played billiards! Well, 'at's what happened to us with these two gamboleers. We played them and they played poker!"

Well, when I wasn't being heavily wooed by the handsome Ben Warren or perusing the railroad maps that look like charts of the nervous system, I assassinated time by reading—not the latest jazz novel, but the classics. I'd hauled off and purchased a vest-pocket edition of the old masters in Los Angeles and having no vest pocket to put 'em in, I read 'em. Like myself, Hazel had secured that schoolgirl complexion without the annoyance of going to college and my girl friend was improving each shining hour by struggling with "French in Ten Lessons." Hazel loves to put on dog.

Jerry and Pete dove off the Pullman at every stop to strut their stuff briskly on the station platform, with such of the other travelers as apparently board a train merely to take a walk—first cousins to the deck-pounders on ocean liners. There was a flock of comely and seemingly unattached ladies on the train and these Jerry and Pete earnestly tried to build up, but alas, with no luck at all.

"You boys need more rehearsals," Hazel laughs at 'em. "Your approach is terrible!"

"'At's what I been tellin' him," says Jerry. "Pete's funny pan scares 'em off!"

"Be your age!" snarls Pete to his gigantic and unhandsome confederate. "I could make forty cuties if you wasn't acin' around with me—you ain't got no sex appeal, you big mug!"

Don't you adore that?

TIME was rolling by us in low gear and it looked as if this trip was going to be the usual hot, dusty, monotonous journey, till we pulled into Dodge City, Kansas. Then things livened up considerably, I'll tell whoever's eavesdropping. Me and Hazel had just set our watches to the change of time when there's a knock on our drawing-room door.

"Probably the porter with the newspapers," I remarked.

"*Entre nous!*" calls Hazel, the French scholar.

The door immediately swung inward and a tall, broad-shouldered, thick-necked youth with a somewhat shopworn countenance greets our startled gaze. He eyes us greedily for an instant and then releases an appreciative leer.

"What's a horizontal word of six letters meanin' a Hindu god's mother-in-law?" he grins, calmly proceeding to sit down on the couch.

Honestly, we were furious! We didn't know this dizzy intruder and we had something less than no desire to make his acquaintance. Hazel reaches over to ring for the porter, but I loathe scenes and I didn't want my hot-headed Ben Warren brought into this thing, so I stayed Hazel's hand.

"Shove off, big boy!" I says coldly. "You got the wrong number!"

"I seen you in the movies!" remarks this egg to the raging Hazel, ignoring my command. "Let's all be boys and girls together—this is a long, wicked ride. I got a friend with me—how 'bout a four-handed game of rummy?"

At this Hazel pushed the bell vigorously, but as the train was in the station, the porter was away getting ice and so forth. Mr. Pest grinned at us some more and coolly proceeded to help himself from a box of candy beside the indignant Hazel.

"It would take a opium fiend to properly appreciate you panics!" he announces, munching away no'sily. "You're the two best lookers I pegged in twenty-six years of witnessin' women."

Things had come to a pretty pass, when the train began to ease out of the station and Ben Warren came down the aisle of the car with the other boys. The door of our drawing-room was open and with their arms full of magazines and newspapers for us they started to troop in, when they saw we had company and they pulled up short. Woe was in the air and I was frantically trying to think of a way to prevent an embarrassing situation, but Hazel started festivities. She leaped up and told Ben that our burly visitor had insulted us.

Th't was all Benjamin wanted to hear and then it was a case of hold everything. He promptly lunged at the fellow, who ducked nimbly out of the way and arose aggressively. Really, our sleeping quarters were now packed to capacity and not even a speculator could have sold you a seat. While Jerry and Pete ran for the conductor and porter at my request, Jimmy Clinch grabbed Ben and begged him to think of his hands. The stranger stood scowling at them and Jimmy pulled Ben outside, whispering to him that if his mighty fists were injured Ben wouldn't

A Chin He Loved to Touch

be able to fight Bad News Nevins in New York and they'd lose the heavy appearance forfeit they'd posted. Benny was burnt up, however, and it took some pungent argument to keep him away from his prey, who apparently would just as soon battle as not.

Jerry and Pete came rushing back with the conductor, the porter, the rummy-playing friend of our antagonist and a mob of greatly interested passengers. Hazel, who thrives on the limelight, was in her element, but honestly I felt frightfully humiliated and did a fade-out behind the door. Through the intervention of Jimmy Clinch and the other man's friend, matters were finally straightened out without any hats being broken, though Ben was still rarin' to go.

Well, I was plenty annoyed at the attention this little incident had attracted to us and I wanted to take all the rest of our meals in our drawing-room, but Hazel talked me out of it. Always acting, both on and off the screen, she said it was too stuffy and murdered her appetite. That was apple sauce, really! Hazel craved to dine in the diner for two reasons. One of them was to dazzle the inmates with her figure and jewelry—she's got two more diamonds than Mrs. Tiffany and you just know she wears 'em! The other reason was because in our drawing-room we'd have to pay for our meals personally, while in the diner one of our male companions would take care of the check. I haven't lived with the charming Hazel all these years without learning her complexes. I know her like King George knows Buckingham Palace and I don't mean maybe. Of course, I realize I'm no cross-word puzzle to Hazel, either.

However, I naturally thought we'd seen the last of that masher, but such was far from the case. In fact, the skirmish in our drawing-room was just a preliminary to a dozen encounters between Ben and this inveterate clown that were only prevented from reaching actual bloodshed by timely interruption. Each seemed to think the other had the chin he'd love to touch and they acted accordingly whenever they met during the balance of the journey—the most exciting trip I've tak' since the time I fell down the stairs of the balcony in a theatre.

Ben was in a continuous state of nervous rage and got red-headed every time he saw this fellow, who went out of his way to be nasty and refused to let go. Jimmy Clinch fluttered around Benny like a young mother with her first progeny, and I don't think James closed an eye till we reached New York for fear Ben would tangle with his vis-à-vis and chip his valuable knuckles. Really, if it hadn't been so irritating it would have been awfully funny.

AT EMPORIA there was a line waiting to go into the diner, with me and Ben at the head of it. Fluently oiled by my heavy boy friend, the steward beckoned us to a table just vacated and as we started for it some one brushed past us, nearly bowling me over. You win your guess—it was Ben's tormentor!

While Ben was still softly swearing through gritted teeth, this roughneck flops down at the very table the steward had given to us. He looked up and sneered aggravatingly at Ben and—the panic was on once again!

"We're first at this table," says Ben, leaning over him, and really there's nitro-glycerine on each word.

"Yeah?" says our tête-à-tête, picking up the menu. "Try and get it!"

"Oh, let's wait, Ben!" I whispered, anxious to avoid violence.

"Please don't start a row in here—everybody's looking at us!"

"But—" begins the steaming Ben.

"Get away from my table!" butts in the gentleman of the new school. "I didn't order you—I never begin a meal with cheese!"

Ben gasps as his insulter nods to me and shows me some gnarled teeth in a grin.

"Sit down and have a poultice with me, kid," he invites. "They heat a vicious grill here and I'll lamb-chop you."

A hand shot down and fastened on his collar. It was Ben's. "Stand up!" pants my escort hoarsely, his face as grim as a loan shark's. "I don't want to hit you while you're sitting down!"

"Blah!" says our mutual enemy. "Don't get giddy with me—if I get up I'll smack you down!"

He managed to squirm away from Ben's hold and jumped to his feet. Honestly, it took all the waiters to separate 'em and I fled to my drawing-room. I didn't leave it for the rest of the ride, either.

At the Kansas City stop I was looking idly out at the station platform when I saw people running past excitedly. Just as I was trying to open the window—an impossible feat—Hazel came in breathlessly.



CWith one leap Ben left the ring and landed beside us. But the crowd's hope of seeing an extra bout was dashed. "Let's call our war off—what do you say?" asks Ben.

"There'll be a murder staged before this expedition's over!" she says. "Ben and that proper boloney are at it in back of the telegraph office! Can you feature that?"

"They're fighting again?" I gasped.

"Well, I don't think it's a petting party," yawns Hazel, sitting down and picking up her French course. "When I left they were giving each other uppercut showers."

That was their last mauling bee—till we arrived at Chicago. At this popular city these boy scouts were both nearly tossed in the cooler for putting on a mêlée in the depot.

"The first thing you know," grins Pete Kift, "them two guys is goin' to get in a fight, no foolin'!"

However, in all of these combats only a half-dozen blows were actually exchanged and these seldom found their intended target

before the gladiators were pulled apart. The boys were too infuriated to aim properly, which was a fine thing, as otherwise at least one of them would have been killed long since.

Jimmy Clinch was the same as a nervous wreck at Chicago from dragging Ben off his Nemesis every five minutes and beseeching his meal ticket to save his precious hands for his coming bout with Bad News Nevins.

"I am protecting my hands!" growls Ben. "If it wasn't for this Nevins fight I'd have knocked that fellow off long ago. To be frank with you, Jimmy, I'd rather take one good honest-to-Kansas wallop at that pest than get triple my guarantee for boxing Bad News Nevins."

"Be yourself!" snorts Jimmy. "There's no nickels in a street fracas and a guy which fights for the fun of it is demented."

"Don't you ever think of anything but money?" asks Ben scornfully.

"Absolutely!" says Jimmy.

"What?" demands Ben, the skeptic.

"How to get it," Jimmy grins.

"At's a victory!" says Jerry Murphy. "Jimmy's right—they ain't no percentage in cuffin' the world for the exercise. 'At's why I didn't clout 'at tomato on the train. Had they been even ten bucks in it, I'd of bounced him myself."

"Or versa vice!" sneers Pete Kift. "You couldn't bounce a tennis ball, Goofy. I only wish that bozo had of choosed me—I'd of knocked him stiff and be done with it."

"You and how many cops?" snorts Jerry.

WELL, we had a couple of hours in Chicago and while Jimmy Clinch took Ben around to the sporting editors, me and Hazel went to the Westward Hotel and bathed. On these transcontinental railroad trips, cleanliness is not only next to godliness—it's next to impossible, really.

Five minutes after by the time we all assembled at the La Salle Street station for the final leap to New York, we were all wishing to high heaven that our train had left us behind. To our amazement and dismay, Ben's tantalizer was a passenger in the same car with us!

As they say in Boston, broiling canine!

When we passed this scissor-bill on the way to our compartment, Hazel was the first to crack. "Oo la la!" she giggles, airing all her French at once. "This is a wow! When we get home we'll

probably find that Patsy is in our apartment. I never had so many laughs in my life—why, I wouldn't trade places with a marriage license clerk!" Hazel's unseemly levity and the idea that she got a kick out of our annoyance being with us again caused me to run a temperature. Besides, seeing this fellow every time I looked around was beginning to give me the heebie jeebys, really!

"You'd laugh at a lynching!" I says peevishly. "Don't you know the minute Ben sees that fool they'll be at each other's throats again? Suppose we all get put off the train?"

"Charman!" pronounces Hazel delightedly. "I'll get a million dollars' worth of publicity. Can't you see the head-lines? 'Movie Star in Railroad—eh—Ruction!'"

At that I quit!

Jimmy Clinch tried to keep Ben in his compartment for the jump to New York, but there was nothing stirring. Benjamin and his shadow met in the club car and for no reason whatsoever they began a series of near-battles that lasted all the way to Grand Central Station. There a dispute over the services of a certain porter started an argument that soon took on the proportions of a first-class fight. Called by a name that cast serious reflections on him, Ben for once forgot about protecting his hands and punched his volunteer opponent lustily on the jaw. He got back as good as he gave, but Ben's next blow staggered his opponent before they were pulled off each other. It again took some tall talking to prevent an arrest, something that would have positively happened if Jerry Murphy hadn't known two of the gendarmes and they hadn't remembered the acquaintance. When we finally left the station I released a heartfelt sigh of relief as I saw Ben's self-appointed sparring partner pass into a taxi and pass out of our lives.

"We was all saps for not tellin' that Humpty Dumpty he was pickin' on Ben Warren, the comin' heavyweight champ," remarks Pete Kift.

"You said it!" agrees Jerry. "'At wouldst of wound matters up five seconds after we first met 'at mock-turtle. The big mug wouldst of swooned!"

But Ben and his adversary hadn't been introduced and the names they called each other were by no means their right ones!

Well, Jimmy Clinch dashed off to keep an appointment with the promoter of the Ben Warren-Bad News Nevins fight and when he came back he looked thoughtful. It seemed that Nevins was highly regarded by the New York (Continued on page 131)



Black cats were one of Ben's pet superstitions, and the near murder of that Ethiopian feline greatly depressed him.

By Bella Cohen

You Look Just Like—

IN PARIS, in Berlin, in Moscow, in London, in Genoa, in New York. On trains and ships and streets, in factories and drawing-rooms, I have been forced to hear the saddest words that woman can hear: "You look just like—"

In the beginning it was a hard blow to my vanity. No woman, except a moving picture "double," wants to be told that she looks like anybody. But after six years of newspaper work and constant knocking about I have resigned myself to the condition that my face is not my own—that I share it with thousands of sisters, wives, sweet-hearts, nieces and cousins everywhere. And because my face is like a thousand others, I have got into strange adventures, some of them amusing and some of them—not so funny.

Recently, after having been greeted as "Lucy, how well you're looking!" while waiting for an up-town Fifth Avenue bus, I went home and parked myself in front of the mirror. "There's nothing unusual about your face," I finally admitted. "Nothing at all. To quote your passport—your eyes are brown, your nose is straight, your mouth is medium, your chin pointed, your hair brown and your forehead high. One of those brown women with fine eyes."

Yet artists and photographers with no ulterior motives have asked me to pose for them on the ground that my face was most unusual—most interesting—mobile—et cetera.

But I've only myself to blame, I suppose. In every country I have visited or lived in, I have unconsciously adopted its clothes and mannerisms and as much of the language as possible. The first week in Berlin found me in a black and white striped suit, short, stubby patent leather shoes and mustard-colored velour hat—just as other middle-class ladies of Berlin were spoiling a perfectly good spring day.

In Paris, I cavorted in a tight-fitting black silk dress, a little beige felt hat and long-toed black suede pumps with enameled buckles—*comme il faut*—for the Right Bank.

In Moscow, during the winter, I wore a *shuba* (sheepskin short jacket) and a rabbitskin hat that smelled depressingly after a walk in rain or snow. I wore the white *volenki* (high felt boots) that reached almost up to my knees. In the spring I wore a tea-cozy sort of hat of many colors and frequently went without stockings—*à la mode*.

In London, I practically lived in a gabardine raincoat and a brown felt hat that I turned, London fashion, down over my face, with the back part bent up from my neck.

With these aids and my way of making myself a part of things everywhere, small wonder that my face has misled so many aunts and uncles and brothers and grandfathers and dear friends. I had been in Moscow less than a month, in the late summer,



Bella Cohen, who says that she is always being taken for somebody else—and so getting into strange adventures.

when I felt myself being followed as I walked along the Petrówka by a short, stocky Russian of middle age. I stopped for a moment as if to look into a small shop. The man also halted. I caught him eying me in a strange way. I decided to cut my walk short and go back home, at that time the Hotel Savoy, where all foreign journalists were housed.

The man continued his patient shadowing. I increased the length of my steps and with difficulty restrained myself from breaking into a run.

To my husband, who was working in our room, I told of the strange behavior of this man.

"Probably a member of the *Tcheka*," my husband laughed. "Let's have some tea. Forget the gum-shoe man."

I did. But a little later when my husband and I emerged from the Savoy bound for a little restaurant on Kuznétzki Most for our dinner, the man reappeared, like a manifestation out of the gloom.

"That's the man," I said to my husband, trying to smile, but the fact was that I was beginning to be afraid.

My husband shrugged his shoulders and we walked on, the man behind us. On Kuznétzki Most we came to our restaurant that had a single light in its window. The strange man came up to us suddenly. I gasped. His eyes searched mine with a blinding abruptness. And then he sighed, and wet his lips with the edge of his tongue and smiled broadly.

"You will excuse me, Madame," he said in Russian. "But I thought you were my wife. You looked like my—wife, who has been dead for three years now. I know what you are thinking—but so many strange things have been happening of late in my country—that I was seized with the thought that—that perhaps . . . You will excuse me—I beseech you."

And the strange man walked off, smiling happily.

In London a most amusing thing happened to me. I was riding to my hotel from Selfridge's when my taxi had to halt in obedience to the cause of traffic. Suddenly the taxi door was jerked open and a young man in a top hat and gray spats and all those things that go with top hats and spats sat down beside me. As he shut the door, he said: "I thought I'd walk down and meet you as you came up. I didn't know you were going to taxi, sis. Confound this door! It's only luck that I chanced to look along in this direction when you got stuck. Ah!"

Having succeeded in closing the door, the young man in the top hat turned around to me. This was the first time that I saw a jaw drop. One hand reached for the door handle and the other for the top hat. "I beg your pardon—er—er—Miss, you look exactly like my sister. Exactly, upon my word!"

With which the Top Hat fled.

Several months later a group of us (Continued on page 167)

The Heart of J

By *KATHLEEN
NORRIS*

G *The Story So Far:*
AY and winsome Juanita loved her California seacoast home, the famous old Espinosa rancho, where she lived with her mother, the Señora.

One day the rancho was visited by two strangers in succession: Kent Ferguson, newspaper man, whom Juanita loved at first sight; and a mysterious veiled woman who talked secretly with the Señora. Shortly thereafter the Señora died; but first she confessed that she was not Juanita's mother at all, and that only a certain Sidney Fitzroy could clear up her parentage. Juanita must find him, but tell no one his name.

Heartbroken, at Kent's suggestion Juanita took a position as secretary of Jane Chatterton, the beautiful, brilliant and socially ambitious wife of Carwood Chatterton, Kent's rich old employer. Very soon she made the startling discovery that Jane Chatterton was the mysterious woman who had secretly visited the Señora. And Mrs. Chatterton for her part, on discovering Juanita's identity, seemed to have some imperative personal reason for getting her out of the household.

To Kent—who, by the way, was in love with Jane, though hopelessly—Jane confessed that Juanita had some connection with her past life, when she was a poor girl. She did not tell him what; and she gave as an excuse for sending Juanita off as companion of a friend of hers going to Manila, the fact that young Billy Chatterton (Jane's son) was falling in love with the girl. Also, when Juanita questioned her directly, Jane practically denied that she had any knowledge of the Espinosa rancho.

Now a further complication entered. Kent unconsciously was falling out of love with Jane and in love with Juanita. He even hinted one day that he might follow her to Manila. Then he went on to tell her something of his work for Chatterton, which included clearing up the title to a certain piece of property. The difficulty here was to find a certain man, who also, incidentally, seemed to have a connection with Mrs. Chatterton's past.

"Funny," mused Juanita, "that you are hunting a man and I am hunting a man. We both have our Sidney Fitzroys."

"Our *what*?" cried Kent. "That's the man I'm looking for too. We're on the same trail, Juanita. Perhaps we'd better stick together and hunt down this Sidney Fitzroy!"

C. "I feel," Juanita said,
"as if nothing would be
cleared up again, Kent."



f JUANITA

A Novel of SUNNY CALIFORNIA

Illustrations

by

Marshall

Frantz

I

IT WAS strange to Juanita that even in the light of this stupendous discovery, this amazing experience, nothing immediate happened. Her mysterious man and Kent's mysterious man, blended into one and the same "Sidney Fitzroy" and discussed from these new angles, was still as entirely undiscovered as he had been yesterday—there was nothing to do about him except go on searching.

Kent after the happy intimacy of the New Year's Day walk, seemed oddly to escape her. But at four o'clock on Saturday she was crossing the hall when they met squarely.

"Another walk?" he asked, without smiling. For she had on her coat and hat.

"Just for fifteen minutes. I feel so stuffy, indoors all day. You couldn't come, too?"

"Nope," he said briefly. And without explanation he went on his way. He had been playing Mah-Jong with Mr. and Mrs. Chatterton in the library; Juanita, hot-cheeked, hurt, going out the door, heard somebody call to him that he was East Wind.

"Rude! Rude!" the girl said to herself, feeling that she hated him, not only for being so but for holding such power to humiliate her. She went off to sleep that night determining that there would be no talk of a picnic the next day, and that she would snub him if he suggested it. She prayed, she wished that he had not talked about a picnic today. It was an exquisite day, one of those strange warm days in a Western winter, that are more springlike than the spring. Evidently some men just said things, to please a passing mood.

It was a little daunting to get back to the house from church at eight o'clock, just as the sun rose gloriously warm and bright, to find him seated at the side door in the roadster, with a lunch-box packed and strapped neatly on behind and a heavy plaid flung carelessly into the seat behind him.

"Oh," she said, happiness creeping into her voice, in spite of herself. "are we going?"

"Well, aren't we?" he asked, frowning.

Juanita hesitated, deep joy in her heart. Everything else was forgotten except that he had remembered the picnic. She was to



“I love you, Kent,” Mrs. Chatterton

have this day with him after all. She looked at the seat beside him. Kent, who was wrapped in a big coat and half hidden behind the morning newspaper, asked abruptly:

“Had your breakfast?”

“Well—no,” she admitted, with a wretched little prick of feeling that she never acted reasonably when she was with Kent.

“Then go in and get it,” he said. “I’ll wait!” And Juanita ran up-stairs for her coffee with a singing heart, threw down her prayer-book, pulled on a more comfortable hat and had joined him again in little more than ten minutes.

This time he smiled approval, folded his newspaper and put it in his pocket, leisurely pulled on his heavy gloves, and when Juanita, quite speechless with felicity, had established herself in the luxurious front seat that was like a deep tipped chair, he came about to her side of the car and tucked the rug firmly about her.

The engine raced; settled. They were off. A sweep about the drive, a smooth mile between familiar fences and gardens, and then they were out upon strange roads, and every minute was adventure and ecstasy to Juanita.

The cool air smote her face and blew the tendrils of her bright hair up against her hat, but she felt deliciously warm, wrapped

snugly in the big plaid, and her eyes, missing not an inch of the bare winter roads, danced with delight like two blue stars.

Kent rarely spoke, but she fancied, as he drove rapidly and skilfully southward, that he liked this adventure as thoroughly as she did. A sense of singing, of shining and rejoicing, possessed the land. More than once, whirling up dizzily into the heartening sunshine, they heard the liquid, heart-reaching song of the meadow-lark.

“Kent, do you smell that?” Juanita asked as they passed a line of shabby, low brown barns, where the black mud was churned deep by the feet of the wandering, huddling, staring red cattle. “Was there ever a smell in the world like the smell of a milk ranch?”

“Did you ever hear it said that the Goddess of Memory was a person one could always lead around by the nose?” Kent asked, with a sidewise glance.

She liked the idea and fell into a thoughtful elaboration of it. “That’s true, isn’t it? Lilac, for instance. When I first smell lilac, it always makes me feel about six years old, in a stiff clean dress, in our garden. And oranges—do you know what oranges always make me think of? When I was sick years ago, and

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whispered. And Juanita was arrested on the threshold by what she saw.

mother'd come into the room peeling one for me, and I'd smell that clean, clean smell, over the cough medicine and milk toast and the wood fire——"

"The smell of certain baked potatoes," Kent added, after a while, "not all, but certain ones, takes me back as nothing else in the world does. My mother had theories about cream for children instead of butter and milk in baked potatoes. To this day, if I put cream in one I can remember my mother. She'd come in and ask Loody—Loody was what we kids called the nurse—her name was Louisa—whether we surely had cream in our baked potatoes."

IT PRESENTED a picture rather different from what Juanita's thoughts of his childhood had been. Cream, and a nurse—she had fancied his rather humbler beginnings.

"You had a sister, Kent?"

"And a brother."

"And you were the oldest?"

"Two years older than my brother, eight than my sister."

"And what are their names?"

"Warren—Cyrus Warren—is my brother's name. And my sister is Mary Stuart—Mimsie, mother called her. Warren's thirty now, and married, and has four kids; Mimsie's married too, and has a baby."

"And you've never seen them?"

He drove for perhaps half a mile in silence. Then he asked, in an unencouraging tone: "Seen whom?"

"The babies," Juanita answered calmly.

"Oh?" he asked. "Oh, no," he added, more mildly.

"I thought," Juanita presently suggested frankly, "that your family was poor."

"On the contrary," he remarked dryly.

In the silence that followed she readjusted her thoughts to Kent's position as a rich man's son.

"I should think," she offered rather timidly, when they had sped through several miles of lovely countryside in silence, "I should think you could hardly resist the temptation to go back to them—to see them all and straighten it all out!"

"While you are in Manila," he answered unexpectedly, "I think I may."

A sudden unreasonable happiness flooded her heart, and she asked, "But what has my being in Manila to do with it?"

"Well," he answered, after a noticeable pause, "possibly a good deal."

Juanita sat silent, hardly daring to breathe.

"You don't know what I mean," the man said presently, in a half serious tone, "and, but for one thing, I'd tell you. One thing," he added, "that makes me feel I can't."

The girl was listening, breathing a little hard.

"I suppose you know," he said, "that there is a woman—"

The world went black about Juanita, and she felt cold and sick. She was glad that she need not move. Her eyes, surprised,

stricken, met his quick glance.

"That you love?" she asked quickly.

"I suppose it might be called that," he admitted.

Juanita's every faculty seemed to be engaged in not betraying the utter confusion and pain that were whirling in her heart.

"Are you"—she tried to ask the question with the conventional cheerfulness—"are you engaged?"

"Engaged?" he asked sharply. "No. And never will be. When I say that there is a woman, I mean only that I admire her—she 'ascinate' me; she has done so for a long time. I can never hope—anything. And yet such a feeling—such a feeling," he added, "has a curious effect upon me. It seems to drain the vitality out of other relationships, out of life generally. One wishes it had never been—and yet one cannot imagine living at all without it."

To this Juanita seemed to find nothing to say. The strangeness of so forceful a personality as his being daunted by any woman's indifference or inaccessibility seemed to take the matter out of the zone of her comprehension entirely.

"The influence of a woman upon a (Continued on page 149)



Photograph by Lafayette, Ltd.

Elizabeth Ponsonby is a staunch and ardent champion of the younger generation.

“ARE you, then, going to grow bushy whiskers?” This was a parting shot from my daughter one day on her way to a rehearsal.

“No,” I shouted after her. “I am too old and, racially speaking, I don’t count.” But she was half-way down the stairs and I do not think she heard me.

My daughter is on the stage playing in “Spring Cleaning.” I am in Parliament. So we both have evening professions. We find time for talks in the morning and lately we have been having heated discussions on the habits and customs of the younger generation of today. She is ultra-modern. I—no, I am certainly not old-fashioned, but I am very critical of the tastes and manners of the young people I come across. The theme I have launched is producing a great deal of dispute among her friends and mine and she and I have snatches at it when she can spare a moment between her egg and the telephone.

Now let me explain what my theme is. The whisker part of it which she insists on detaching and emphasizing is incidental and metaphorical and was used by me only to secure attention to a problem which I believe ought to be examined seriously.

The youth of today has dissociated itself from its immediate predecessors more completely and more abruptly than any children have from their parents in the past. Women, suddenly liberated by war and political enfranchisement, have secured a degree of independence and self-assurance unknown to their sisters in the past. The usual numerical preponderance of women over men has been greatly magnified owing to war casualties which chiefly affected young men.

Take these three factors and you can account for a good deal in the modern girl. She discards convention and tradition and is subject to no parental restraints. She is self-sufficient and prepared fearlessly to enter into the rough-and-tumble of life. As she has invaded the male sphere, she adopts the male habit and copies men in costume and manner—the shingled hair, the

I am in BUSHY

But my

By Arthur

flat chest, the cigaret, the cocktail and the oath. She is in command; fashion helps her as she gradually adopts male characteristics.

What is the result on the young men? Their effeminacy has grown concurrently with the masculinity of the girls. But the girls, being girls in spite of appearances and being as I have said in such a vast majority, still desire to attract and consequently have resort to exposure. The garment we used to call a gown might be more accurately described as a broad loin-cloth. Legs and arms, back and front, are unveiled.

Do the young men respond? Not a bit of it. Are they interested or excited? Not at all. With placid indifference they take it all as a matter of course.

Now we come to the whiskers. I point to early nineteenth century days as a time when the sexes intensified their own individual characteristics. The major with his bushy whiskers reached the high-water mark of virility. He took the lead and the women put up their defenses in the shape of the crinoline; thus showing that fashion in its vagaries follows some underlying sexual impulse. Girls were difficult to reach; they were surrounded by guardians; they were easily shocked; and the exposure of an ankle was indecency. All this stimulated the majors to a more intense degree. The action and reaction were normal and healthy.

All through the nineteenth century women accentuated their femininity. The bust and the bustle may have been overdone, but is not the worship of flatness a trifle overdone today? Padded hair and cork hips seem to us now ridiculous. But it is a far more painful business to get rid of natural protrusions than to hook on sham ones.

I do not want to moralize or to express any preference. I merely describe the contrast and try to explain the physiological implications.

“Can you be at home to tea tomorrow?” asked my daughter a few days later. “I have asked a few friends in to talk to you about those whiskers,” she explained.

I came home the next afternoon and heard voices up-stairs. I was nervous but I walked into the room boldly and was immediately introduced to a famous lawyer. I did not expect this. I was caught in a trap. He was nearer her age than mine; I should be cornered. I should be laughed out of court. The room quickly filled. An intellectual young man took his seat in the center; three shingle-haired girls followed him and then a young married woman. I was soon hedged round by serpentine coils of pink and pale copper legs.

The lawyer eyed me as I made a few lame observations about the habits and fashions of today.

“Ah,” he said, “I see it is the old story of the older generation protesting against the youth of today. They’ve always done it.”

“Yes,” I agreed, “but you must admit that the contrast between the present youth and their parents is greater than that which has ever existed between two immediately succeeding generations. It may be due to many causes, of which one no doubt is the enormously increased facilities for locomotion. But the fact remains.”

With this proposition there was general agreement; the girls seemed to be glad I had noticed it. One of them, sitting by the fireside, lighted a cigaret and said, “Girls today are much more

in Y my ur

Favor of WHISKERS

daughter isn't

Ponsonby, M. P.



Photograph by Lafayette, Ltd

**Whereas Arthur Ponsonby, who is
her father, thinks they are on a dangerous road.**

clear-headed"; "More honest," said another; "Braver," said a third; and "More efficient," added the married lady, and she went on:

"They are both busy and businesslike. Look at your daughter—whatever she takes up she does promptly, punctually and efficiently."

I agreed, and admitted that freedom had taught them self-reliance.

"But you parents did not give them freedom. They took it."

"What you say," began my daughter, flinging her cigaret end into the fire, "is that we are too masculine. We don't set out to attract men. Your generation were obsessed with sex—we don't think about it."

"The old taboo!" laughed the lawyer. "Thank goodness that has gone!"

"Well," continued my daughter, "anyhow there is no longer any humbug; everything is above-board. We are honest about it and we talk of everything quite naturally. If you want us to shrink back into crinolines, all the humbug will have to be started all over again."

"What do you mean by 'humbug'?" I asked.

"Oh, you know—vapers, shrinking, pretending to be shocked, never being able to call a spade a spade, simpering, blushing. Because we don't go in for that sort of thing, it does not mean we are more immoral."

"But you like to be thought immoral?"

"No. We do what we like and we don't care much what people think."

"Just fancy returning to crinolines!" my daughter continued. "Our dress is sensible. We go about on motor-bikes and in buses. We are much more active. We have not time to be bothered with huge brimmed hats and long hair. I was one of the first to shingle my hair."

"Look," said the married lady. "I wear this"—pointing to a neat little brimless bowler which was stylishly crushed onto her shingled head—"because I do not have to hold it on with both my hands as I walk along the street."

NOTHING of the sort, I thought to myself. You all wear it because it is the fashion, and if a hat with a brim a foot broad was the fashion tomorrow, you would wear that too. You are all slaves of fashion just as much as ever you were. But I did not say this out loud; what I did say was perhaps ruder still.

"No time!" I exclaimed. "You all talk of having no time. Many of you find time for hair trimmers, manicurists, complexion specialists and bust flatteners."

There was a general uproar after this and a relighting of cigarets. The girl by the fire shouted indignantly but quite irrelevantly:

"My mother once told me of a woman in the eighties calling on a very hot day and removing yards of stuffing from her bust. I call that disgusting!"

"I am not defending the eighties," I answered, "nor the early nineteenth century either. I simply say that your present worship of flatness means you are trying to look like boys."

"Well, at any rate," she said, "we are freer, more open, more broad-minded."

"Far more tolerant, too," added one of the others.

"Less particular and fastidious," my daughter put in, adding to my surprise, "and perhaps rather indiscriminate in our tastes."

"Quite true," the lawyer added. "And not only with men but with everything. It is a matter of complete indifference to them if they go and see 'Hamlet' or 'No, No, Nanette.' Taste and judgment do not matter. They tolerate anything and everything."

"Shows they are not narrow-minded," mumbled the girl by the fire.

I thought it was about time to turn my guns onto the other sex, especially as I heard one of the girls muttering, "When is he going to get to the bushy whiskers?"

"You will all agree," I said, "that the girls take the lead and I maintain that, as a consequence of their independent masculine habits, the young men have become effeminate. They have become tame without virility and without passion. There is a much larger proportion of effeminate young men at the universities now than there was in my day."

"Or in my day," broke in the lawyer with some vehemence. "My complaint is that they have no plan, no strong desires about anything. They are content to do a little washy decoration, write little poems, or squat on the floor and do nothing at all except gossip. They have no keen impulse for a profession or some real occupation."

"That is only because the professions are overcrowded. There is not room for them. They do not know where to turn. The competition is too great," answered the young man.

"There are, I am told, the esthetes," I began again, "and the hearties, and I believe the esthetes will soon outnumber the hearties. Now what I want to know is"—and here I turned to the girls—"if you saw in a room an esthete and a hearty, which would you go and talk to?"

"The esthete, of course," the girls (Continued on page 146)

A Man who *believed* in DEVILS

By Ernest Poole

Illustration by Charles Livingston Bull

I MET him in a small log house up in the north of Russia in the early autumn of 1917. In Petrograd the Bolsheviks were almost ready to seize control, and even in this remote region some of the peasants and river men had raided two estates near-by. But my Russian friend and host in his small house was undisturbed.

"What will be, will be," he said. "If they take my land, I go away. I am tired with being excited so much. Tonight I have asked to come to us, a man whose life is so quiet and deep that he barely notices revolution. He barely has noticed even the war."

Early that evening the man arrived. He wore a clean blue Russian blouse, and his trousers were tucked into high boots. Foma Pavlovitch was his name. Though past middle age, his thick short hair was still as red as when he was a boy, his strong tanned face had barely a line, and his brown eyes were as quiet that night as though Lenin had never been born. After a few words with my host and a bow and a quiet look at me, he accepted a cigaret and sat down.

"He has finished talking now for the night," my friend told me, with a smile. "He has said that he is glad to look at an American. He will watch you now, and will much prefer that we do all the talking. So I will tell you some stories about his very quiet life. He is trapper and hunter. All his days and also many of his nights he has spent in the forest—always quiet, never making any haste—even when killing a bear with a knife.

"I myself saw him do this once, long ago when I was quite young. And he met the bear so quietly that he and the bear were like polite people who meet in a ballroom for the first time. When we came to the bear in the forest that day, Foma's old gun refused to shoot. I fired then but my shot went wild.

"Then Foma said, in a low steady voice, 'Please, young *barin*, let us alone. This is between the bear and me.'

"A waltz with the bear was now begun. They were going and going around a big tree—Foma always just ahead. Again and again the bear would turn quickly and start to go the other way, but Foma was also quick to change. And so they were walking around and around. No yells, no excitement—politely they went—till suddenly the hunter turned and sunk his long knife into heart of the bear. So quick it was done that the bear was dead as though from a stroke of lightning.

"And now," continued my friend, with a smile, "I shall tell you of a day when Foma Pavlovitch, just once in his life, did run from a bear. But the bear was dead. It happened so. He came one day to my father and said he had tracked a bear to a hole in our land.

"My father agreed that the bear should be shot and also that I should go on the hunt. With us went two sportsmen from Petrograd, rich merchants there; and each of them had two splendid guns with bullets exploding like little bombs. Only hand grenades these gentlemen lacked! Foma Pavlovitch carried a gun with a barrel five feet long, which he had made from a gas-pipe. It was loaded with some pieces of lead and iron nails.

"So we came to a spot where a huge pine tree, thrown down by a storm, had left a big hole, with roots above and all covered with snow. Our hunter asked the sportsmen then if one of them would like to come and tickle with a stick the bear, in order to bring him from his hole. They replied that he should do it himself.

"Carefully he searched around and came back with a pole five meters long. As he went quietly near the hole, I looked and saw both sportsmen now some sixty meters distant, quickly climbing a small tree. The hunter put down his stick in the hole and began to turn it around and around.

"Suddenly came a great yell from the hole, a cloud of snow was bursting up, and through the snow came the big head and angry eyes of an old gray bear. As he climbed upward Foma Pavlovitch fired his gun directly into the mouth of the beast.

"As he fell, the hunter with one stroke of knife cut open the belly, then leaped to me and catching my arm said, 'Now we must run! For the real danger now begins!'

"And scarcely could we get away when the bullet bombs of the gentlemen began to fly and burst in the bear and in the tree; the forest was loud with the roar of guns! At last the cannonading ceased. Then both merchants came down from their tree and laughed at us for running off. For a long time they disputed whose bullets could have killed the beast.

"And now," said my friend, "I am going to tell you one more story about this man—but to understand what courage he showed you must know that, like most of the peasants here, Foma Pavlovitch firmly believes that devils sometimes come in beasts. This is not a funny tale. Although it happened long ago, the memory makes my blood feel cold!

"That year the winter was very long, and toward the end the affamished wolves began to come in the night-time to villages and to estates. One of our dogs was eaten by them, and also two small children in a village not far off. So now came Foma Pavlovitch and proposed to my father that we go to kill the wolves in their meeting place which he had found. And we went with him one night. With us a peasant drove a sledge, to carry a cow which had died that week.

"SO AT last we came to a clearing deep within the forest. In the middle was a hole—a little limestone quarry once—and Foma had made quite a fortress there; for over the quarry he had built a roof of branches covered with snow, and on this he had thrown water until the roof was solid ice. Two small holes he had left in it, one of them through which to shoot and the other for entering the den. Down there he put fir boughs and straw, and also some short thick planks for closing up holes when we were within.

"The peasant drove the sledge away, and soon the night was coming down. No wind, no noise but very little crackings of ice-covered branches. It was still like death that night. I looked up through our hole at a black sky on which were streaming paths of light—blue and green and many shades—aurora borealis there.

"At last from far in the forest came the long wailing yell of a wolf. It was joined by another and very soon by many more, until the forest all around was filled with those long wailing sounds. The dead cow lay some twenty meters from our hole. We had fastened it by wires tight to stumps of trees close by, so the wolves could not drag it back into the dark.

"Now an old wolf came slowly out, very cautious, looking around. He crept to the cow and with suspicion looked at the wires, sniffed along them to the stumps. Then he crept away and sat down; and lifting up his long gray face, he began a low wailing lamentable song of two notes, which floated off in the night. Long silence. Then from the dark of the trees the others slowly began to come out.

"By now the lights in the sky streamed bright, the snow reflected, and the night was filled with green and blue mixed light. Many, many wolves appeared, and in that strange greenish light it was a fantastic spectacle!

"So excited I was, I forgot to be frightened—until I saw how in our hole my father and Foma made signs of the cross. I did the same, and grew quite cold. I started to move my feet to get



There flashed into my thoughts as I watched all I had heard as a little boy about the were-wolves—devil wolves.

warm, but in that instant I felt the big hand of Foma like iron close on my arm. And I knew I must not make one sound!

"The were-wolf!" he whispered. With a great leaping of my heart I looked and saw an enormous old wolf, quite gray and almost white with age, walk slowly out from that black forest onto that green-lighted snow. I saw how he looked on all the pack, and how in one great half of a circle all the wolves were sitting.

"The were-wolf turned and went to the cow. A long time he looked and sniffed wires and stumps; then he came back and sat on haunches, face to all that silent pack.

"He lifted his head to the quivering sky and gave such a wailing long lament, with such awful hunger and loneliness there, that the terror came into me like ice; and now there flashed into my thoughts all I had heard from my peasant nurse, when I was quite a little boy, about the were-wolves—devil wolves—with powers to kill any man. With my hands I covered my eyes.

"All the wolves were wailing now. I kept eyes shut till that lament had risen like cries of souls that are lost, and died away. Then silence came and I looked out. The old were-wolf gave one sharp bark, and all the pack leaped swift as lightning strikes on the cow.

"My father and Foma raised their guns. I did the same, and we fired five shots. With loud, fearful yells of rage the wolves

came rushing to our place. We scarce had time to close our hole, and soon it seemed that the roof of our den would be torn to pieces now. Down in the darkness, still we sat without a sound.

"Then a match was struck, and Foma Pavlovitch lighted a lantern that he had. His hand was shaking a little now for every peasant since he was a child knows of the powers were-wolves have. But he picked up his ax and pulled back the board. Through the hole came a big gray head, and the were-wolf's eyes shone like eyes of devil there.

"I saw Foma look, and I saw fear come—but I saw how with all his muscles of iron he fought fear off and raised his ax. Quiet and steady and sure he swung—and the ax crashed into the were-wolf's head.

"Now, with their old leader dead, slowly the pack grew quieter and with whines they crept away. In the forest once more was a silence like death. I fell asleep. When I awakened, dawn was come and I was alone. With a leap I was up out from the hole—and I saw how my father and Foma Pavlovitch were standing by the dead wolves on the snow. Quietly the hunter said, 'There will be no more trouble with wolves this year.'

As he finished his story, my Russian friend lighted another cigaret and looked with a smile at our visitor.

"Yes, he is a quiet man," he said.

By *W. Somerset*

Maugham

Illustrations by

Herbert

M.

Stoops



The

Yellow Streak

THE two praus were dropping easily down the river, one a few yards ahead of the other, and in the front one sat the two white men. After seven weeks in the jungle and on the rivers they were glad to think that they would lodge that night in a civilized house. To Izzard, who had been in Borneo since the war, the Dyak houses and their feasts were of course an old story; but Campion, new to the country, though at first he had been amused by the strangeness of his surroundings, hankered too now for chairs to sit on and a bed to sleep in.

They had started at dawn; the river then was very shallow and ran clear and bright over a shingly bottom; the trees leaned over it so that above there was only a strip of blue sky; but now it had broadened out and the men were poling no longer but paddling. The day wore on and the heat was no longer so oppressive. Campion looked at the shabby silver watch on his wrist. It could not be long now before they reached their destination.

"What sort of a chap is Hutchinson?" he asked.

"I don't know him. I believe he's a very good sort."

Hutchinson was the Resident in whose house they were to spend the night, and they had sent on a Dyak in a canoe to announce their arrival.

"Well, I hope he's got some whisky. I've drunk enough *Arak* to last me a lifetime."

Campion was a mining engineer whom the Rajah on his way home had met at Singapore and finding him at a loose end had commissioned to go to Sarawak and see whether he could discover any mineral which might be profitably worked. He sent Willis, the Resident at Kuchin, instructions to afford him every facility, and Willis had put him in the care of Izzard because Izzard spoke both Malay and Dyak like a native. This was the third trip they had made into the interior and now Campion was to go home with his reports.

They were to catch the Rajah Brooke, which was due to pass the mouth of the river at dawn on the next day but one, and with

any luck should reach Kuchin on the same afternoon. They were both glad to get back to it. There was tennis and golf there, and the club with its billiard tables, food which was relatively good, and the comforts of civilization.

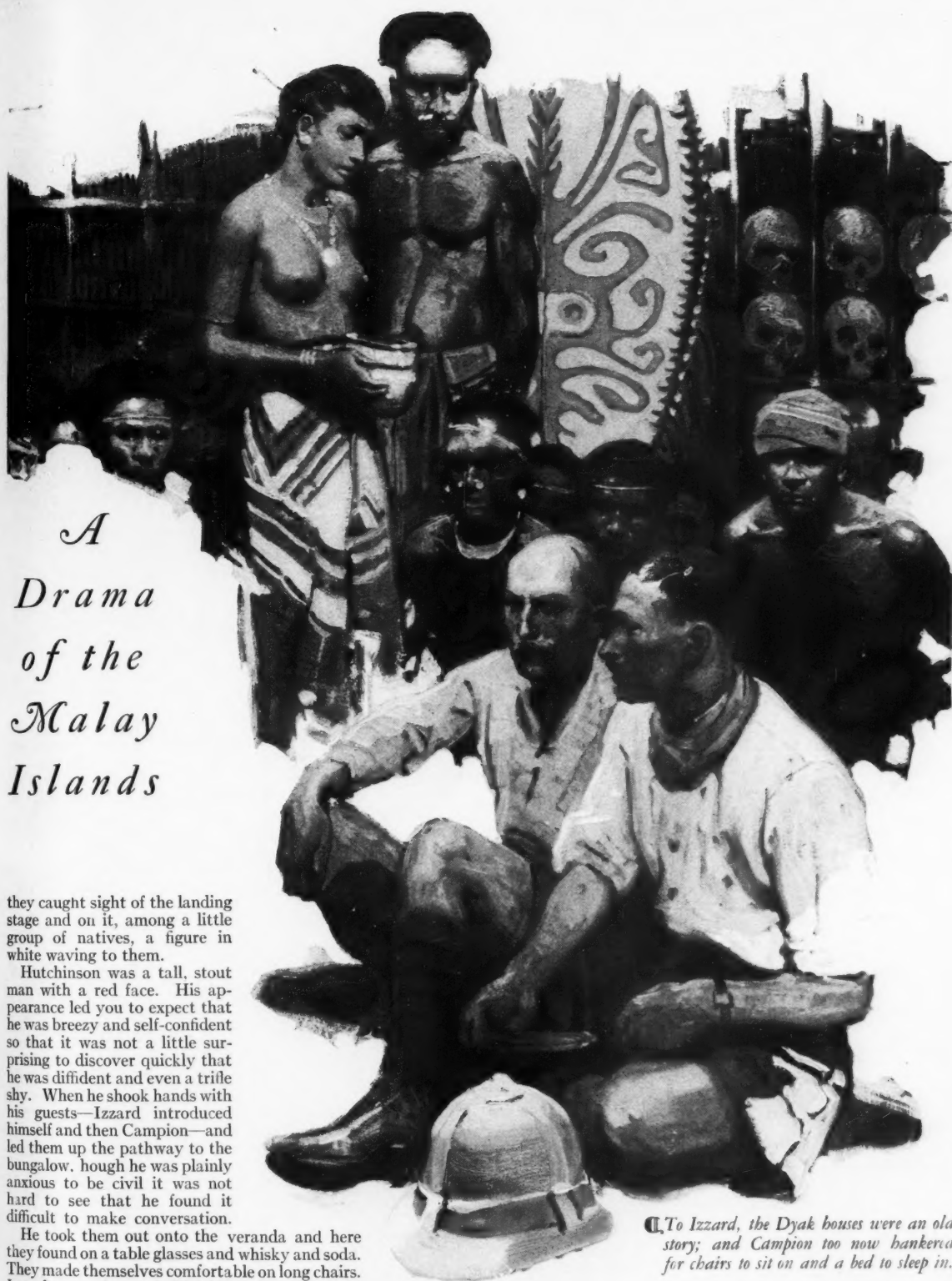
Izzard was glad too that he would have other society than Campion's. He gave him a sidelong glance. He was a little man with a big, bald head, and though certainly fifty, strong and wiry; he had quick shining blue eyes and a stubbly gray mustache. He was seldom without an old briar pipe between his broken and discolored teeth. He was neither clean nor neat; his khaki shorts were ragged and his singlet torn; he was wearing now a battered old topi.

He had knocked about the world since he was eighteen and had been in South Africa, in China and in Mexico. He was good company; they had got on very well together, but Izzard had never felt quite at home with him. Though they joked and laughed together, got drunk together, Izzard felt that there was no intimacy between them; for all the cordiality of their relations, they remained nothing but acquaintances.

He was very sensitive to the impression he made on people and behind Campion's joviality he had felt a certain coolness. He was exasperated by the possibility that this common little man did not think entirely well of him. He desired to be liked and admired. He wanted to be popular. He wished the people he met to take an inordinate fancy to him so that he could either reject them or a trifle condescendingly bestow his friendship on them.

By some chance he had never met Hutchinson, though of course he knew all about him just as Hutchinson knew all about him, and they would have had many common friends to talk of. Hutchinson had been at Winchester and Izzard was glad he could tell him that he had been at Harrow.

The prau rounded a bend in the river and suddenly, standing on a slight eminence, they saw the bungalow. In a few minutes



A Drama of the Malay Islands

they caught sight of the landing stage and on it, among a little group of natives, a figure in white waving to them.

Hutchinson was a tall, stout man with a red face. His appearance led you to expect that he was breezy and self-confident so that it was not a little surprising to discover quickly that he was diffident and even a trifle shy. When he shook hands with his guests—Izzard introduced himself and then Campion—and led them up the pathway to the bungalow, though he was plainly anxious to be civil it was not hard to see that he found it difficult to make conversation.

He took them out onto the veranda and here they found on a table glasses and whisky and soda. They made themselves comfortable on long chairs. Izzard, conscious of Hutchinson's slight embarrassment with strangers, expanded; he was very hearty and voluble. He began to speak of their common acquaintances at Kuchin, and he managed very soon to slip in casually the information that he had been at Harrow.

"You were at Winchester, weren't you?" he asked. "I wonder if you knew George Parker. He was in my regiment. He was at Winchester. I dare say he was younger than you."

Izzard felt that it was a bond between them that they had both been at these particular schools and it excluded Campion, who obviously had enjoyed no such advantage. They drank two or three whiskies. Izzard in half an hour began to call his host

To Izzard, the Dyak houses were an old story; and Campion too now bankered for chairs to sit on and a bed to sleep in.

Hutchie. He talked a good deal about "my regiment" in which he had got his company during the war—he still called himself Captain Izzard—and what good fellows his brother officers were. He mentioned two or three names which could hardly be unknown to Hutchinson.

They were not the sort of people that Campion was likely to have come across and he was not sorry to administer to him a neat snub when Campion claimed acquaintance with some one he spoke of.

"Billie Meadows? I knew a fellow called Billie Meadows in Sinaloa many years ago," said Campion.

"Oh, I shouldn't think it could be the same!" said Izzard, with a smile. "Billie's by way of being a peer of the realm. He's the Lord Meadows who races. Don't you remember, he owned Spring Carrots?"

Dinner time was approaching and after a wash and a brush-up they drank a couple of gin *pahits*. They sat down. Hutchinson had not been to Kuchin for the best part of a year and had not seen another white man for three months. He was anxious to make the most of his visitors. He could give them no wine, but there was plenty of whisky and after dinner he brought out a precious bottle of Benedictine. They were very gay.

Izzard was getting on famously. He thought he had never liked a fellow more than Hutchinson and he pressed him to come down to Kuchin as soon as he could. They would have a wonderful beano. Campion was left out of the conversation by Izzard with the faintly malicious intention of putting him in his place and by Hutchinson through shyness; and presently, after yawning a good deal, he said he would go to bed.

Hutchinson showed him to his room and when he returned Izzard said to him: "You don't want to go to bed yet, do you?"

"Not on your life! Let's have another drink."

They sat and talked. They both grew a little drunk. Presently Hutchinson told Izzard that he lived with a Malay girl and had a couple of children by her. He had told them to stay in their own room while Campion was there; Hutchinson had not quite known how he would take it; and although of course the Rajah knew all about it, it might well be that he did not wish a stranger to see too much.

"I expect she's asleep now," said Hutchinson with a glance at the door which Izzard knew led into his own room, "but I'd like you to see the kiddies in the morning."

Just then a faint wail was heard and Hutchinson with a "Hulloa, the little devil's awake," went to the door and opened it. In a moment or two he came out of the room with a child in his arms. A woman followed him.

"He's cutting his teeth," said Hutchinson. "It makes him restless."

The woman wore a sarong and a thin white jacket and she was barefoot. She was young, with fine dark eyes, and she gave Izzard a bright and pleasant smile when he spoke to her. She sat down and lighted a cigaret. She answered the civil questions Izzard put to her without embarrassment but also without effusion. When the two men began to talk again in English she sat on quite quietly, faintly rocking herself in her chair, and occupied with none could tell what calm thoughts.

"She's a very good girl," said Hutchinson. "She looks after the house and she's no trouble. Of course it's the only thing to do in a place like this."

"I shall never do it myself," said Izzard. "After all, one may want to get married and then it means all sorts of botherations."

"But who wants to get married? What a life for a white woman! I wouldn't ask a white woman to live here."

"Of course, it's a matter of taste. If I have any kiddies I'm going to see that they have a white mother."

Hutchinson looked down at the little dark-skinned child he held in his arms. He gave a faint smile. "It's funny how you get to like them," he said. "When they're your own it doesn't matter that they've got a touch of the tar-brush."

The woman gave the child a look and said she would take it back to bed.

"I should think we'd better all turn in," said Hutchinson. "Lord knows what the time is."

Izzard went to his room and threw open the shutters which his boy Hassan, whom

he was traveling with, had closed. Blowing out the candle so that it should not attract the mosquitoes, he sat down at the window and looked at the soft night.

The whisky that he had drunk made him feel very wide-awake, and he was not inclined to go to bed. He took off his ducks, put on a sarong and lighted a cheroot. His good humor was gone. It was the sight of Hutchinson looking fondly at the half-caste child which had upset him.

"They've got no right to have them," he said to himself. "They've got no chance in the world. Ever."

He passed his hands reflectively along his bare and hairy legs. He shuddered a little. Though he had done everything he could to develop the calves, his legs were like broomsticks. He hated them. He was uneasily conscious of them all the time. They were like a native's.

Of course they were the very legs for a top-boot. In his uniform he had looked very well. He was a tall man, over six feet high, and he had neat black curly hair and a neat black mustache. His dark eyes were fine and mobile. He was a good-looking fellow and he knew it, and he dressed well, shabbily when shabbiness was good form, and smartly when the occasion demanded. He had loved the army and it was a bitter blow to him when, at the end of the war, he could not remain in it. His ambitions were simple. He wanted to have two thousand a year, give smart little dinners, go to parties and wear a uniform.

He hankered after London. Of course his mother was there and she cramped his style. But London was large. She had been a beautiful creature in her youth when Izzard's father, a member of the Malay Civil Service, had married her; but now she was a fat woman with gray hair who sat about all day smoking cigars.

Izzard was twelve years old when his father died and then he could speak Malay much more fluently than English.

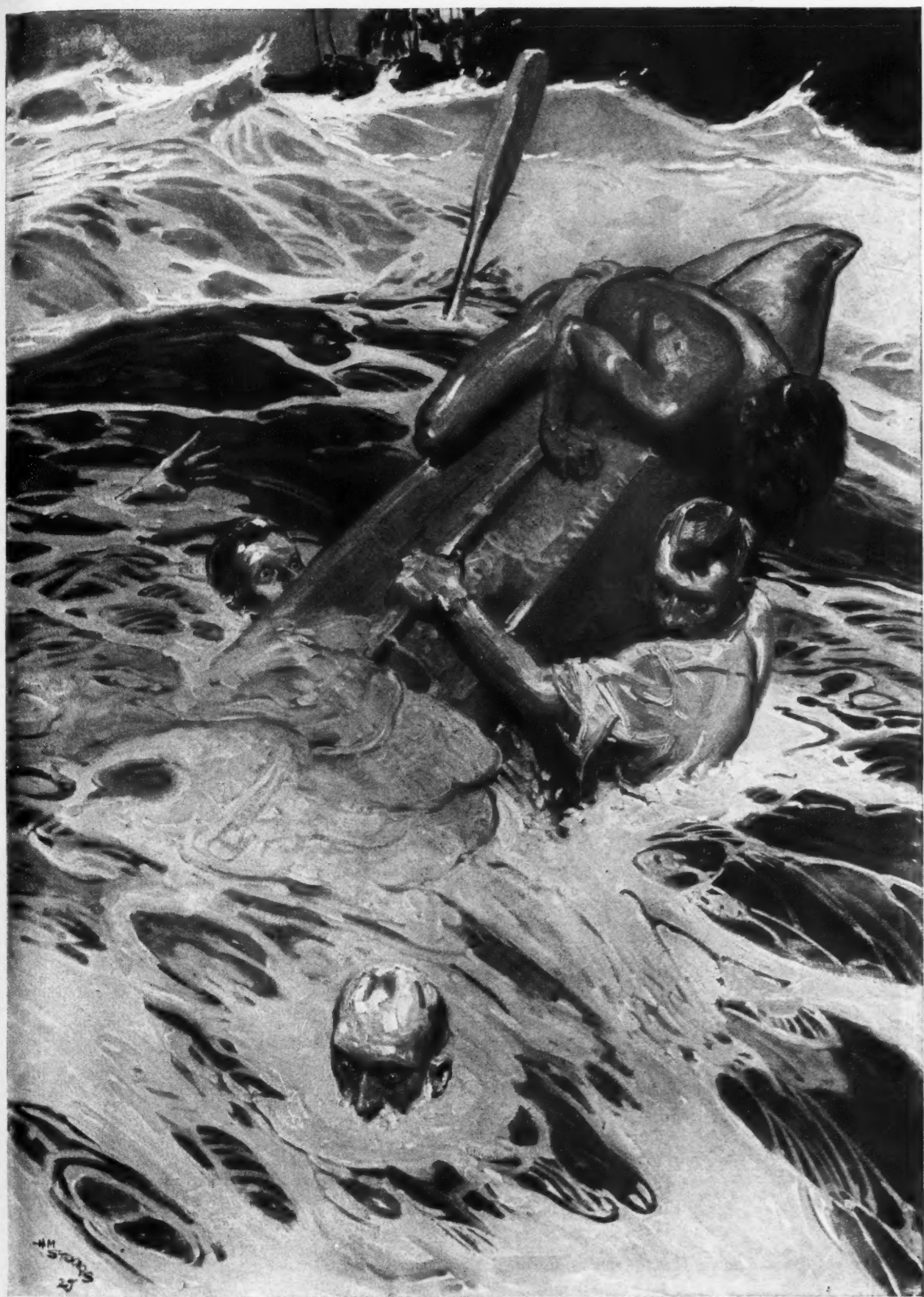
An aunt offered to pay for his education and Mrs. Izzard accompanied her son to England. She lived habitually in furnished apartments and her rooms with their Oriental draperies and Malay silver were overheated and stuffy. She was forever in trouble with her landladies because she would leave cigaret ends about. Izzard hated the way she made friends with her landladies; she would be shockingly familiar with them for a time and then quarrel with them furiously and change her lodgings.

In the house she wore an old and tawdry dressing-gown, but when she went out she dressed herself in extravagant colors, but untidily, so that it was a mortification to her dapper son. He wondered how on earth he could produce her if ever he got engaged to the girl of good family he was looking for to make his wife. He quarreled with her frequently—she made him impatient and he was ashamed of her; and yet he felt for her a deep tenderness; it was almost a physical bond between them, something stronger than the ordinary feeling of mother and son, so that notwithstanding the failings that exasperated him, she was the only person in the world with whom he felt entirely at home.

It was owing to his father's position and his own knowledge of Malay—for he had never quite forgotten it—that after the war, finding himself at a loose end, he had managed to enter the service of the Rajah of Sarawak. He had been a success. He played games well; he was strong and a good athlete. In the rest-house at Kuchin were the



C. "She's a good girl," Hutchinson had said. "She looks after the house and she's no trouble."



Fear seized Izzard, a blind animal fear, and it gave him new strength. *Campion—what did he care about Campion?*

cups which he had won at Harrow for running and jumping. He had the social graces. He had an abundant fund of small talk and he was an asset at parties. His cheeriness made things go. He ought to have been happy.

He did not know why at this moment he was oppressed by such a strange uneasiness.

When Hassan brought him his tea next morning he had a rack- ing headache and when he went in to (Continued on page 215)



Thomas Burke, author of "Limehouse Nights"

When Charlie Chaplin visited London a year or two ago for the first time since he had left it as a penniless third-rate pantomime actor, the one man he immediately asked for was Thomas Burke. In many ways these two strange geniuses are a good deal alike. They both are small, shy and extremely sensitive men—artists from their toes to their finger-tips. And they both worked their way up from the bottom; they both climbed out of the hell of English lower-class life to the top. That's probably the reason they understand each other so well—and know the heart of the whole world besides.

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By Thomas Burke

I Paid the Price of POVERTY

IT IS a common cant phrase among the comfortable classes that poverty is not a crime. Like most cant phrases, it is a lie. Poverty is a crime, or the world would not punish it so severely. Any man who has been poor—I do not mean “hard up” or short of money, but actually poor, and born among the poor, as I was—has something of the resentment felt by a man who has been in prison. For he has suffered as much as any man who commits a serious crime against society. But with the difference that he does not know what offense he has committed.

I received the first punishment early in life, and it was some time before I could discover that my offense was poverty and humble birth.

I was ten years old, and was a newcomer at a school of considerably better quality than our social position entitled me to. I had got there by passing an examination by which, each year, one boy from the common school was promoted to this better school. We were in the playground, myself and a group of my new schoolfellows, and an enterprise was being planned to a distant park. One boy who had taken more notice of me than the others asked, “You coming, too?” I was about to say “Yes,” when another boy, whom I knew because I had sometimes polished the taps and cleaned the boots at his father’s house, interposed.

“We can’t have him.”

“Why not?”

“Well, he don’t belong to us. Besides, his people work at our house.”

They looked at me then as at a curiosity. One young democrat spoke up for me. “What’s it matter? He’s all right, isn’t he?”

“Yes, but—he’s not one of us.”

They went off then, and left me.

I can smile at the situation now; but I was twenty-six before I could smile at it. I was twenty-three before I ever entered a decent house or sat at a decent table among clean people, or wore a decent suit of clothes. Between ten and twenty-three I was to suffer many more stabs against my poverty.

I was made to see that there is a far wider gulf, in England, between the laboring classes and the middle classes, than between the middle classes and the aristocracy.

I was of the poor, the servant class, who are not expected to have fine feelings or sensitive skins. They are expected to put up with scorn and patronage and interference, and if they become restive under these matters, they are called insolent and upstart. In America a man can give menial service and still be a man; in England, the servant, whether waiter or domestic or cab-driver or clerk or shop assistant, must not only give service, he must say “Sir” to everybody, and confess his inferiority to those he is serving by taking all sharp words and peremptory commands and reproofs, and be called a fool or an incompetent, without any answering back. He is a servant, a menial, and if he wants to escape servitude, the way is hard for him.

Ask any man who has climbed out of the back streets, whether he would like his climb over again. Ask Ramsay MacDonald. Ask Lloyd George. Ask any labor leader. Dickens knew the horror of that climb. Charles Chaplin knew it; you see it in every one of his pictures—the outcast of delicate feelings but without the social graces, struggling against scorn and insult in his endeavors to rise out of the pit.

Again and again, in my early twenties, chances came to me of getting a better job or of meeting people I wanted to meet; and again and again I lost it because my boots were broken, and my shirt and collar a week old; or because I could not raise the few pence for the railway fare. Millions of pounds are given annually to orphanages and religious enterprises, but nobody has thought of opening a bureau where a poor young man could get a suit of clothes and a clean collar with which to make a bid for escape from the back street.

But the main horror of being born poor is not material, but moral. Every man who has escaped carries secret scars of slights and insults and scorns. From this moral stigma of class against class I suffered far more than from the material miseries of poverty—hunger and insanitary homes and fatigue and wet boots.

On one of my holidays from school, two of my people were minding a big house in the country, the property of an ancient family; and they were permitted to have me with them. I had the run of the estate, and on the family’s return I met the children of the house in the paddock.

They said “Hullo!” I said “Hullo!” They said, “Is the woodpecker’s nest still in the tree behind the stables?” I said “I don’t know.” They said, “Let’s all go and see.”

We went, and we got on well together for about an hour, until their mother arrived, when somehow the party was broken up. Next day I heard her talking to one of the gardeners.

“Who is that bad-mannered little fellow? . . . Who? . . . Well, teach him that the housekeeper’s boy says ‘Sir’ when he speaks to Master Charles and Master Leonard.”

After that we were no more friends. When I and the boys did meet in the garden or the paddock, I addressed them as instructed; and that “Sir” became a barrier. Years later, when I had published my first volume of poems, I met them again, and they were full of congratulations. But there was a memory between us that made those congratulations worthless.

WHEN I got my first job in a city office, I suffered equally because I had not the right manner or the right accent or the right attitude. Most of the clerks were boys from public schools (the equivalent in America of expensive private schools) of good appearance and bearing. I was a charity boy, and they knew it, and they complained of my accent and my ways, and cut me out of their mutual intercourse.

Perhaps they were justified, for I was not of their kind. They never stammered or spluttered when they spoke. I did. They never got hot or incoherent. I did. They never wore the same collar for six days. I did. When they went out to luncheon, they lunched. When I went out to luncheon, I walked round the streets eating three biscuits and looking into restaurants and imagining what it would be like to have a real luncheon.

They never had to sneak into the lavatory on rainy days and put brown paper in their leaky boots to avoid catching cold. I did. They never looked nervous when spoken to; they hadn’t been to a charity orphanage. I had. They could look people in the face and tell a lie. I couldn’t look people in the face, and, though I always told the truth, I always left the impression of having told lies. Because, you see, I belonged to the poor, and as the poor are always suspected of lying—as you well know if you have ever visited a police court—they are always doubtful whether their truth will be believed, and so become nervous and behave like liars when they are only making statements of fact.

One of the titled directors, noting that I was alert and sharp, took pity on me—he called it “taking an interest”—and would have encouraged me so long as I was willing to be encouraged in his way. The rich are like that—they will do quite a lot for the poor, provided the poor will take just what they give them. This man was willing to encourage me to get on in business, but when he found that I didn’t want to get on in business, but that I wanted to write and wanted money for books and subscriptions to libraries, he was as rude as his class can be when they choose, and told me that it was amazing what ideas the poor got into their heads nowadays; the sooner I got that particular idea out of my head, and gave my mind to the work that my class fitted me for, the better. Momentarily I was crushed, but the memory of that insult only made me the more (Continued on page 146)



Lapidowitz

Illustration by

LAPIDOWITZ sat in Milken's Café wondering when his ship would come in when Harry Berger entered and seated himself at the same table.

"Hello, Lappy," he said. "I'll buy you a cup of coffee. That's all. I'm broke and you needn't ask for a loan."

"I never thought of it," replied Lapidowitz, indignant and disappointed. "But could I have also a pack of cigarets? Is something wrong with you, Harry? You look kind of lonesome."

"Oh, I'm all right!" said the young man airily. "Only I just got it in the neck good and hard." He was quite a good-looking chap, young, red-checked and vigorous. His nervousness and wobegone spirit were painfully apparent. "Just made a darned fool of myself. I got stuck on a nice girl and just because she's got a lot of money, her father won't let her marry me. But I guess I'll get over it."

"Why don't you go and have a talk with her father?" asked Lapidowitz sagely.

"I did," responded the young man. "I just came from there. He told some big bum to throw me down the stairs."

"There's other fish in the sea," said Lapidowitz consolingly. "I know what it's like. If I was you I wouldn't bother my head about such a girl. Well, look who's here! If it ain't Mischa Cohen, my old friend!"

Mischa Cohen, however, bestowed merely a frigid nod in response to the *Schnorrer's* greeting and seated himself in the farthest corner of the room, where, after ordering a cup of coffee, he bowed his head upon his hands and seemed lost in reverie. Harry Berger continued to talk, but Lapidowitz had ceased to listen. Mischa Cohen, the retired wool merchant, possessed infinitely more attraction for him than the disappointed lover who had confessed that he was broke. Had Lapidowitz listened attentively to the young man's confidences—yet who knows? Lapidowitz deliberately abandoned the young man, crossed the room and seated himself opposite the obviously depressed wool merchant.

"Why you don't cheer up, Mr. Cohen? You got a face like a funeral. Ain't you got more money as you know what to do with? Ain't you got your good looks and your health?"

Cohen sighed. "Hello, Lapidowitz," he said. "I was afraid you would come over. But there ain't nothing doing. You never paid me back the ten dollars I lent you a year ago."

"Did I said anything about money matters?" asked Lapidowitz, with an injured air. "I just come over out of sympathy. I want you to know that my heart is in the right place even if I am a poor man. Oh, Max! Bring me a cup of black coffee and a pack of cigarets."

"Well, as long as you ain't trying to borrow, it's all right," said Cohen, with a sigh. "And if you want to know what the trouble is, I'm lonesome. Just five years ago yesterday my wife died and today I got thinking about it and I said to myself, 'The older you get, the more lonesome.' So if you'll be good enough to shut up I'll pay for your coffee and cigarets."

Lapidowitz, whose credit in Milken's was for the time being exhausted, had expected nothing less. He gazed at Cohen with wide open eyes.

"Are you *meshugeh*?" he asked. "A fine-looking man like you lonesome? Why don't you get married again? If I had your money tonight, I'd be married by tomorrow morning."

"Don't be a fool," said Cohen. "I'm going on fifty-seven."

"Fifty-seven? Excuse me, Mr. Cohen, if I take the words out of your mouth," said Lapidowitz, "but don't be a fool. What's fifty-seven when a man's lonesome and got plenty of money? Take my advice and get married."

"Who would marry me?" asked Cohen, a dim light of awakening interest glowing in his eyes. "I don't know anybody. I live in Mrs. Goldstein's rooming house and I never go anywhere but here. At my age, should I expect a woman to come running in here and grab me and make me marry her?"

"Mr. Cohen," said Lapidowitz solemnly, "I know a lady who would be just crazy to marry you if she could only see you. Say the word and I'll fix it. But I'm a poor man and you're rich. Supposing—"

"Lapidowitz," said Mischa Cohen, rising and reaching for his hat, "I ain't one of them supposers. Supposing ain't kosher business. Introduce me to a nice lady who is willing to marry me and I'll do all the supposing. And you won't be sorry."

Lapidowitz jumped to his feet. "Mr. Cohen," he said, "I'll tell you what kind of a man I am. I'll trust you. I'll arrange so you can meet a fine lady and I'll leave all the rest of it up to you."

Cohen walked toward the door, hesitated for a moment, drew a five dollar bill from his pocket and returned to the table. "Here," he said. "Take this. No, you don't have to give me a I. O. U. I wouldn't give a cent for all the I. O. U.'s you could write in a year. But you know where you can always find me. Is she fat? I hate fat ones."

"She's a angel. You'll be satisfied, take my word."

"No fat ones," grunted Cohen. "And she's got to have good teeth."

As Lapidowitz mounted the steps of the little brick house in which Abey Sirovich, the *Shadchen*, lived, he was quite sure that he caught a glimpse of Abey sitting at the basement window, a black velvet skull-cap upon his head. Yet when a moment later he was ushered into a room on the second floor, he found the *Shadchen* seated at his desk, busily occupied in checking up a long list of names.

"Hello, Lapidowitz! Sit down and excuse me for a minute. I'm terribly busy today."

Lapidowitz waited, the while that Sirovich went through all the contortions of an exceedingly busy man. Finally he leaned back in his chair.

"Well, what is it?" he asked. "You see how busy I am. I hope you ain't thinking of getting married."

By BRUNO LESSING

Spills the BEANS

J. Henry

"Look here, Sirovich, I got a idea that you and me can do business together. I got a party what's fifty-seven and what's got more money than he knows what to do with. What have you got for him? And if you got a good party and my party is satisfied with her, what do I get out of it?"

"What's his name?" asked Sirovich, alert.

LAPIDOWITZ stretched out the palms of his hands. "There you go," he said deprecatingly. "Right away you take me for a sucker. D'ye think for a minute that I'd tell you his name and let you make all the arrangements yourself?"

"But how can I tell if I got a party to suit him if I don't know first what he's like?"

"Oh, what he's like! That's different," said Lapidowitz. "I told you he was fifty-seven. He ain't bad-looking, but then on the other hand he ain't no raving beauty. But he looks pretty decent and after all it's the money what counts. He's a widower and he's lonesome. Ain't you got some party what ain't too particular?"

Sirovich, with wrinkled brow, scrutinized the list on the desk before him. And then, "Oh, Abey!" came a peremptory voice from the basement.

The *Shadchen* rose quickly. "Coming right down," he replied. "Excuse me a minute, Lapidowitz. My wife is calling me."

Lapidowitz waited just long enough for Sirovich's footsteps to fade into silence. Then he leaned forward and picked up the list. At the very top he read: "Mary Aaronson. \$50,000. Daughter of Sam Aaronson, knee pants, Canal Street. O.K." The shuffle of returning footsteps fell upon his ear and he quickly laid the sheet of paper upon the desk.

Sirovich entered the room and resumed his seat. "Lapidowitz," he said, "I got a party what I'm sure is just the right one for your friend. If the two of them come together and everything is fixed up, I'll give you ten percent of what I get."

"With percents," said Lapidowitz, "I never do business. How much do you get and how much do I get?"

"What I get," said Sirovich, "is none of your business. But if you don't trust me, supposing I say I give you fifty dollars? That is, if both parties is satisfied."

"Don't make me laugh," said Lapidowitz. "A party with money, like mine, is worth a hundred dollars if he's worth a cent. And if your party got anything in her own name, I bet you'll get much more than a hundred dollars out of her. So we could save a lot of time if you didn't talk nonsense."

"All right," said the *Shadchen*. "I know the kind of a *gonif* you are, but life is too short to tell you about it. Let's say a hundred dollars. Now what's his name?"

"What's the name of your party?" asked Lapidowitz.

Sirovich glared at him. "Either we do business or we don't," he said, with a snap of his teeth. "If you don't want to tell me who your party is, how could I go ahead and talk to my party?"

"You talk like a *schlemiehl*," retorted Lapidowitz. "You got to talk to your party and I got to talk to mine, but I don't see why there is such a hurry about it until I know a little bit more. Is your party fat? My party wouldn't have anything to do with the business if she's a fat one."

"The party I got in mind don't weigh more than a hundred and forty pounds," said the *Shadchen*.

"How is her teeth? My party is particular about teeth."

"I ain't a dentist," replied Sirovich, "but she got her own teeth and they look fine."



"Miss Aaronson, I got a party what's looking for a wife," said Lapidowitz.

"All right," said Lapidowitz, rising. "I'll see my party and fix up a meeting. But before we have any meeting you got to put in black and white the whole arrangement." He walked to the door, hesitated for a moment and then turned around. "Could I have ten dollars on account?" he asked.

"You couldn't have ten cents on account," replied the *Shadchen*.

Lapidowitz went straight to Mrs. Birdie Goldstein's rooming house and asked for Mischa Cohen. Mrs. Goldstein herself opened the door and surveyed the *Schnorrer* from head to foot.

"What do you want to see him about?" she asked.

"That," observed Lapidowitz, "is largely my business."

"He ain't in," said Mrs. Goldstein.

Lapidowitz surveyed the ample form of the landlady. He observed that some of her teeth were black and that a couple were missing. And he grinned.

"Well," he said, "when he comes in, tell him that I called and that I'll be around Milken's tonight waiting for him. And also tell him that I think he's perfectly safe here."

Lapidowitz never knew whether she had the faintest idea of what he was talking about or not. But from the vehemence with which she slammed the door he concluded, cheerfully, that she felt annoyed.

He then consulted a directory, found the home address of Sam Aaronson, the knee pants king, and called upon his daughter. The servant who opened the door kept him waiting in the hallway until the young woman came tripping down the stairs. He gazed at her in amazement. She could not have been more than nineteen or twenty years old and fairly glowed with health and beauty.

Lapidowitz slowly shook his head. "I couldn't believe it possible," he said, "if I didn't see it with my own eyes."

"What are you talking about?" asked Miss Aaronson. "Who are you? Did you want to speak to me?"

"Miss," said the *Schnorrer*, "I was talking about you. My name is Lapidowitz. And I want to talk to you about something important."

The girl hesitated for a moment and then led him into the parlor and pointed to a chair. Lapidowitz lighted a cigaret and settled back in a comfortable attitude.

"Now you listen to me," he began, "and I'll save you a lot of money. I don't understand why a good-looker and young one like you should have to go to a *Shadchen* to get a husband, but that ain't none of my business. As long as you want, you got to pay him a commission if he gets you a husband. Now I got a party what's looking for a wife. He ain't so terribly young—he's somewhere around fifty. But he's got plenty of money and if you should ever happen to be a widow you'd be a rich one. Now I don't know what kind of arrangement you made with Abey Sirovich, but I'll tell you what I'll do. You let me bring around my party and get acquainted with him and if he's satisfactory all you have to pay me is fifty dollars. And I bet you with the money your father got and the money my party got, Sirovich would make you pay ten times as much."

DURING this recital the girl's face had registered the most amazing variety of emotions. Amazement, bewilderment, indignation, shame, resentment, amusement and finally firm determination had recorded themselves in her expression.

"Your name is Mr. Lapidowitz, you say. May I ask who told you that I went to a *Shadchen*?"

"Nobody told me," answered the *Schnorrer*. "But I was in Sirovich's office and with my own eyes I seen your name on his list. Mary Aaronson, daughter of Sam Aaronson, knee pants, Canal Street."

For a long while the girl sat with hands clasped, her head slowly nodding as if she were trying to grasp the situation, her eyes staring into vacancy. Then, with sudden determination, she rose and left the room. A few minutes later a servant entered.

"Miss Aaronson does not care to talk to you. She wishes you would go away."

Lapidowitz drew himself up haughtily. "Oh, that's the kind she is?" he said. "Well, it's her loss more than mine. Parties like mine don't grow on bushes."

When Sam Aaronson, the knee pants king of Canal Street, reached home that evening the servant handed him a note. He read it and collapsed into a chair, trembling.

"Dear Father," it ran, "I never thought you would try to get a husband for me through a *Shadchen* just because you did not want me to marry Harry. But a Mr. Lapidowitz told me all about it. He saw my name on a list in Sirovich's office and I know that no one but you could have done it. Harry and I were willing to wait a long time until he got a better position. But I don't want to be insulted like that. So Harry and I are going off this afternoon to get married. It's all your own fault. Mary."

For nearly an hour Aaronson sat there, his head bowed upon his hands, trying to understand it all. Then he seized his hat and rushed out of the house.

After waiting a long time for Mischa Cohen to arrive, Lapidowitz decided to go to his house. "If he comes while I'm out," he said to Milken, "tell him I just went to his house and I'm coming straight back." Cohen, however, was not at home. Nor, for that matter, was anyone else, for a continued ringing of the door-bell brought no response. Lapidowitz drew a soiled envelop from his pocket and scribbled a note upon the back of it.

"Dear Mr. Cohen," he wrote, "I have a good party for you. She don't weigh more than 140 lbs. and she got fine teeth. Will wait for you in Milken's. Lapidowitz."

He tucked the note under the door and returned to the café.

"Mr. Cohen ain't been here," said Milken, "but there's a man what's looking for you. Mr. Aaronson, the big knee pants fellow from Canal Street. He's sitting over there."

Seeing Milken's finger pointed at him, Aaronson rose and walked swiftly toward the *Schnorrer*. "Are you Mr. Lapidowitz?" he asked.

"That's me," said the *Schnorrer* amiably. "I suppose you come to talk over a business proposition with me."

"First of all," said Aaronson, "I want to make sure that you're the man what called on my daughter and told her you saw her name on a list in Sirovich's office."

"You got it exactly right," said Lapidowitz.

Lapidowitz Spills the Beans

"Then this is the business proposition I got for you," exclaimed Aaronson. And his arm shot out like a flash. The blow landed full upon the *Schnorrer's* nose.

News travels quickly in the Ghetto. Even while Lapidowitz was bathing his injured nose before the kitchen faucet, the rumor arrived that Mary Aaronson had eloped with Harry Berger.

Harry Berger! A penniless young man. Had he only known that it was the daughter of the knee pants king whom Harry was in love with, all might have been different. He might have helped the young man and won an amount of gratitude which some day he would surely have translated into cash.

"It's my unlucky day!" thought Lapidowitz.

Abey Sirovich, the *Shadchen*, was walking to and fro in his office, exclaiming "Oy! Oy! Oy!" when Sam Aaronson entered.

"My name is Aaronson," he said. "Did you give my daughter's name to Lapidowitz?"

Sirovich approached him eagerly and seized him by the arm. "No! No! No!" he cried. "I didn't give that dirty *Schnorrer* nothing. He brought me nothing but bad luck. Look! Look at the note what I just got. From Mrs. Birdie Goldstein, what's been on my list for a year. She's old and she's homely and she would have taken anything. And Lapidowitz comes in with some party what he wouldn't give me the name of and right away I had Mrs. Goldstein in mind. Now she sends me a letter to take her off my list because she's going to marry Mischa Cohen, the rich old wool man. So what do I do? I go around to see her and there ain't nobody home. I thought maybe she would give me a little commission for carrying her on my books so long. Business is terrible. But tucked in the door is a note and I open it. And I find out that Mischa Cohen is the party what that loafer had in mind. If he got any commission out of it I'm going to a lawyer and sue him."

Aaronson stared at the *Shadchen*. "What's all that rigmarole got to do with me?" he demanded. "What I want to know is, how did that *Schnorrer* get my daughter's name in your office?"

Sirovich turned up the palms of both hands in a deprecating gesture. "Ts! Ts! Ts! That's nothing," he declared. "I keep a list just for a bluff. I put on it the names of all the rich ladies what I hear about and I always leave it on my desk for people to look at. It's a kind of advertisement for my business."

"Let me see that list," said Aaronson peremptorily.

Sirovich handed it to him. Aaronson glanced merely at the top line and saw his daughter's name. He tore the list into a dozen bits.

"I got a bad temper," he said calmly, "and I don't like to do anything wrong to nobody." But Lapidowitz saw that list and told my daughter about it. And she thought I did it and ran off with a fellow what ain't got a cent and what I'll probably have to support some day. So I don't think you can blame me if I think you're the cause of all my trouble."

And with great swiftness but without undue excitement, he punched the *Shadchen* on the same spot and with the same force with which he had struck the *Schnorrer*.

ALL the guests had departed from Milken's Café excepting Lapidowitz. The *Schnorrer* was still waiting for Mischa Cohen to appear.

"That *gonif* Sirovich ain't going to get the best of me," he explained to Milken. "I'm going to make Cohen put it in black and white and then I'll make Sirovich do the same. After that I don't care how the two parties get together."

"Well, well!" exclaimed Milken. "That's funny. Because here comes Sirovich now. He's up late."

"I guess he's anxious about that business," said Lapidowitz, turning his head. "Well, Sirovich, are you all ready to settle the matter?"

"I am," replied the *Shadchen*, and he flew upon Lapidowitz. "*Gonif*!" he cried. And whether through sheer luck or whether he had profited by Aaronson's example, the blow landed full and effectively upon Lapidowitz's nose.

An hour later, the cold water from the kitchen faucet had eased the *Schnorrer's* suffering. Milken helped him put on his coat and even brushed his silk hat for him.

"It looks like it was a bad day for you, Lapidowitz," he said.

The *Schnorrer* nodded mournfully. "Once more he pressed his handkerchief against his nose. "Could you let me have ten dollars on my I. O. U?" he asked.

A cold, steely look came into Milken's eyes. "Would you like me to give you another punch on the nose?" he asked.

Doesn't this look like getting ready for a whole meal!

Here are vegetables! Fifteen of them—the very finest that grow—selected by Campbell's with even more care and attention than can be given by busy housewives to buying the vegetables for the home table.

Here is meat! The rich beef broth in Campbell's Vegetable Soup challenges and stimulates your appetite.

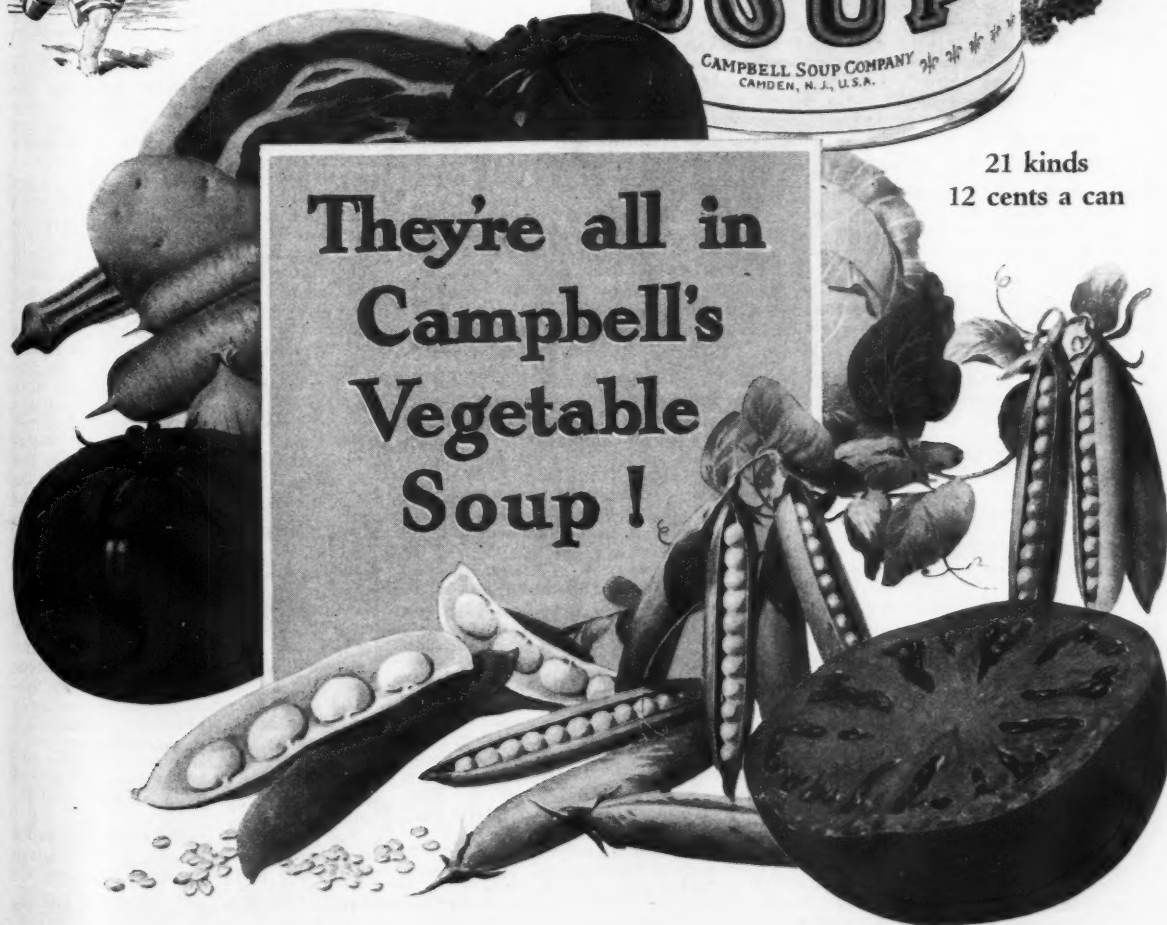
Here are nourishing cereals, fresh green herbs and skillful seasoning. And how well Campbell's famous chefs know the secret of pleasing your taste!



When we have a race for dinner
Count on me to be the winner.
I can hardly wait a minute
For my bowl with Campbell's in it!

21 kinds
12 cents a can

**They're all in
Campbell's
Vegetable
Soup!**



The Tenderfoot Girl by F. R. Bechdolt (Continued from page 85)

voice was serene with relief at his discovery, "I remember that half-breed now. I killed his brother back in New Mexico." The storekeeper drew closer and Curt lowered his voice. "He'd broke jail in Las Vegas and shot the deputy sheriff."

Then he started light-heartedly on his long ride home. And Betty closed the door which she had been holding ajar to watch him as he left. Her face was white when she went to her room. All she had caught was Curt's first statement, and with those words there had recurred to her the memory of the hot noontide at the stage station when she had heard his name for the first time.

"The day Curt Wilcox killed that man from Lincoln County."

The instinct which guided Betty away from her aunt and led her to her uncle the next morning was unerring and purely feminine. She felt that such information concerning Curt's past as she could wring from the former would be more or less deleted; while as to the latter she had no such misgivings. In which she was quite right. When it came to saying the wrong thing, old Beaver was absolutely infallible.

He was alone in the store and she seized the opportunity to broach the subject of the young cattleman. But it was characteristic of Beaver studiously to avoid any topic which was thrust upon him; and when she had followed him through the discussions which included two Texas cattle wars, his last attack of rheumatism, the commercial ratings of various citizens of Paradise and several of his wife's shortcomings, she found herself no nearer to Curt's record as a gun fighter than she had been in the beginning.

"Now I have often set here thinkin'," he was telling her confidentially, "that ef yo'r aunty had been a man, she would of made some of these here fellers hard to ketch that calls themselves he-wolves around these parts." He twiddled his goat's beard. "I bet she would of done her share of killin's."

"Were there," she interrupted discreetly, "so many men killed here, uncle?"

"Well, no." He shook his head and spat judicially. "The' wan't, at that. That is, the' wan't so many alongside of some places I have seen. I mind one night back in Mason County, Texas, when we waded knee-deep in blood."

"They say," she interrupted in desperation, "that Mr. Wilcox—"

"Who, Curt?" He seized upon the name with avidity. "Speakin' of him, that makes me think, I ort to tol' Curt las' night; Jack Slade is in Tombstone an' he has made his brag that he is aiming to ride over here some day to shoot up the town. He's bad, Jack is. In Silver City the's five hundred dollars' reward on him now fer murder. I bet he's killed a dozen men an' he don't like me an' Tinkham nohow. Somebody's got to get that feller an' I reckon Curt's the best man to handle the job."

"He has killed many men?" she asked faintly.

"Hum!" He pondered, tugging at his shred of whisker. "Yais, Curt, he's burned his share of powder."

"Lemme see. There was them two lads at the Cloverdale ranch. I never did get exactly the straight of that; any more than 'twas the crack of day an' Curt was layin' fer 'em outside the house. He got one of 'em in the doorway with a load of buckshot—blew the top of his haid clean off. Right afterwards the other one come bustin' out an' Curt drilled him through the lungs with his fo'ty-five."

"Hum. Yais. Then the' was Driftwood Jim from up in the Mimbres kentry. He come along with two six-shooters, but Curt had organized the play by campin' in the open an' he tuk along his Winchester. Done had Jim outa pistol range from the start. So first he kilt his hoss in under him—then finished him a leetle later on."

"That makes three. The' was a man from Lincoln County, too. It was in front of the O. K. corral over in Tombstone. I come along in time to see that feller die. I mind his last words. 'Gimme air,' says he. 'Stan' back an' gimme air.'" He frowned. "'Pears like the' must be more than that—where be yo' goin', honey?"

In the fear that he might find others, she was in full flight. And now, having managed with his accustomed facility in such matters to give the wrong impression by leaving out a good three-quarters of the truth, old Beaver went whistling about his daily tasks.

"What I want to know," his wife demanded of him when she had buttonholed him after the noon meal, "is what yo' have been a-tellin' Betty. She was white as a sheet when she come back from the store this mornin'."

"Who—me?" he asked. "Why, nothin'. She was askin' me about ol' times back in Texas."

Unconvinced by this, she determined to learn more of the matter, but before she could talk with her niece, Mrs. Chilson and her brood of children arrived for an afternoon visit. So the visions which her uncle's lurid descriptions had conjured were still fresh in Betty's mind when Curt came riding into Paradise leading the sabino pony.

Ma Smith was in the back yard saying good-by to her caller and there was none but the girl to answer his knock.

"You wouldn't care to take a ride?" he asked her. It was his intention to supplement the invitation by stepping aside and revealing to her the pony, bedecked in its new side-saddle, but there was something in her face which caused his smile to fade.

"I'm afraid not," she answered in a level voice.

"Ef yo' would like to take a look at that pony—" he went on lamely.

"No," she interrupted and her voice was icy now—he never knew the effort it was costing her to keep it so—"I don't think I would." She caught her breath and the color had fled from her lips. "Good day."

"Good day," he repeated to the little horse when he had led it back to the corral. "Jes' like that. I reckon that she didn't want to see us."

Returning from her back yard farewells in time to get a glimpse of Curt Wilcox riding up the street, Ma Smith sought out her niece, and when she had found her in the little bedroom, one look at the girl's face was all she needed.

"What," she asked gently, "was that ol' man of mine tellin' yo' about Curt Wilcox this mornin', lamb?"

She listened to the halting repetition of old Beaver's all too realistic descriptions and her face hardened in a manner which betokened no good to her lord and master.

"So that was it?" She sat down beside Betty on the bed. "I reckon he didn't tell yo' how them two fellers over at the Cloverdale ranch had killed the stage driver an' a passenger, nor how Curt was the only man on hand with sand enough to go out after 'em. I bet he didn't mention how Driftwood Jim had slaughtered eight men and had gi'f it out he was a-goin' to shoot Curt on sight. Nor how the feller from Lincoln County was tryin' to murder Curt from behind for the reputation it would give him."

Betty made no answer. The older woman patted her shoulder gently.

"There, lamb. Yo' don't understand some things. I have known of Curt Wilcox givin' the other feller the first shot to make sure he had an even break. Ef 'twan't fer sech men, women couldn't live here."

Her niece shook her head. "Nobody has a right—" she was beginning.

But Ma Smith interrupted her softly, "Ef a rattlesnake would show up in the front yard an' yo' had a gun, yo'd shoot him, wouldn't yo'?"

Silence from Betty followed her question. "Ain't a finer man than Curt Wilcox—"

This time it was Betty who interrupted. "Please," she whispered, "don't say his name to me."

Ma Smith rose slowly from the bedside. "I have got to go an' feed the men-folks," she said. "Yo' stay where yo' be, lamb."

That night the male citizens of Paradise who happened to be sojourning about the whisky barrel found the Justice of the Peace disposed to keep open house till morning.

"My ol' woman," he explained succinctly, "is on the rampage. It does beat — the way she can make a fuss over nothin'."

Thereafter there was no talk on the subject of Curt between Betty and her aunt. Of evenings the sound of the organ became familiar on the town's brief street. Now and again, as time wore on, old Tinkham and one or two other favored ones gathered in the little parlor. But Curt was not among them. Thenceforth the hamlet of Paradise saw him only when some urgent errand demanded his presence in its streets.

There came a flaring day in mid-July. Most of the men of Paradise had ridden over to the abandoned mine at the other side of the mesa where the Mexican smugglers rendezvoused to traffic with them. For a pack train was due before midnight from the Chihuahua villages, with several *aparejos* full of 'dobe dollars. Beaver and Constable Tinkham were the only men-folk who would be on hand for the noon meal.

Ma Smith had departed for a visit with Mrs. Chilson soon after the breakfast dishes were stowed away.

"Keep the kitchen fire up while I am gone, lamb," she had called to Betty, who was writing letters in her room. "I got some beans on."

Some time later the girl remembered the injunction. Returning from the errand, she was passing through the dining-room when her eyes happened to fall on Beaver's cartridge belt and the holster, with the single action revolver in it, hanging from a nail behind his place at the table. It occurred to her that her uncle must be growing forgetful; she had never known him to go without that harness before. There was something in the sight of the heavy pistol butt protruding from the leather sheath which always roused her aversion. She turned away from it row with a little shiver and hurried back to her room.

The silence which enveloped the house was over the whole hamlet of flat-topped adobes. A quartette of Mexicans, lounging in the strip of shade before the deserted blacksmith shop, were the only living beings in sight and they were as immobile as the building wall against which they had draped themselves. Within the cool recesses of the general store old Beaver was busy ranging some canned goods on the shelves behind the counter. Tinkham was whiling away the time by peeling thin shavings from a bit of shingle.

So the solitary horseman who came around the bend of the road, entering the brief stretch between the flat-topped buildings where the two dusty ruts assumed importance as a street, found Paradise a-drowse in the hot sunshine. In such expectation he had timed his visit; and as his restless eyes took in the situation, there came into them a gleam of satisfaction.

One of the Mexicans before the blacksmith shop heard the pony's footfall and glanced up; at his low exclamation the inert forms of his companions were galvanized to sudden life. Unostentatiously all four of them slid to their feet and vanished around the corner of the building.

Now the rider's teeth flashed, but in the smile there was no winsomeness. He pulled up his broncho and dismounted, throwing the reins over the hitching-rack.

There was in all his movements a litheness



"The advertisement said 'Fels-Naptha gives extra help'

"Extra help! That's only half the story!"

Extra help that means a deeper, sweeter cleanliness!
Extra help that makes washday easier on yourself—easier on your clothes!

What a joy to get bright, sparkling cleanliness in clothes hardest to get clean! What a relief not to be all tired out after the washing is done! What a satisfaction to know your clothes are *safely* cleaned—whether done by yourself or by someone else!

Only when you put Fels-Naptha to the test will you fully realize how much its *extra help* means.

Splendid soap and dirt-loosening naptha—working together—give Fels-Naptha this *extra* washing-help you cannot get in any other form.

Isn't it worth a penny more a week to get this *extra help*?

Millions of women know that nothing can take the place of Fels-Naptha, and wouldn't be without it for all their household cleaning. Why not get a bar or two at your grocer's today, and put it to the test in your home?

PROVE the extra help of Fels-Naptha. Send 2c in stamps for sample bar. Address Fels-Naptha Soap, Philadelphia



The original and genuine naptha soap in the red-and-green wrapper. Buy it in the convenient ten-bar carton.



Smell the naptha in Fels-Naptha!

Use water of any temperature with Fels-Naptha. Boil clothes with Fels-Naptha if you prefer. You are bound to get good results any way you use it. The real naptha in Fels-Naptha makes the dirt let go, no matter whether the water is cool, lukewarm or hot. Be sure to include Fels-Naptha in your camp kit this Summer. It makes short work of cleaning clothes and dishes.

FELS-NAPTHA

THE GOLDEN BAR WITH THE CLEAN NAPTHA ODOR © Fels & Co. Philadelphia

Must we revise our package slips?

In the larger sizes of Edgeworth containers we have long been in the habit of enclosing a slip or card, bearing the following invitation:

Thank you! As a user of Edgeworth tobacco, we are sure you appreciate its merits, which have won for it a Distinction among Extra High Grade products.

May we not ask you to urge your friends who are not smokers of Edgeworth to give it a trial. You may use the other side of this card. Thank you.

Larus & Bro. Co.

Mr. Newman returns a slip to us with this notation:

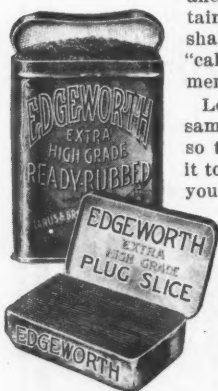
Larus & Bro. Co.,
Richmond, Va.
Gentlemen:

My friends all use Edgeworth, showing that I select men of good judgment for my friends. I have smoked your tobacco for twenty-five years.

Yours appreciatively,

B. S. Newman.

The question is, shall we change the wording from "friends" to "acquaintances" on our container slips, or how shall we avoid being "called" by other club members?



Let us send you free samples of Edgeworth so that you may put it to the pipe test. If you like the samples, you'll like Edgeworth wherever and whenever you buy it, for it never changes in quality. Write your name and address to Larus & Brother Company, 4-H South

21st Street, Richmond, Va.

Edgeworth is sold in various sizes to suit the needs and means of all purchasers. Both Edgeworth Plug Slice and Edgeworth Ready-Rubbed are packed in small, pocket-size packages, in handsome humidor holding a pound, and also in several handy in-between sizes.

We'll be grateful for the name and address of your tobacco dealer, too, if you care to add them.

To Retail Tobacco Merchants: If your jobber cannot supply you with Edgeworth, Larus & Brother Company will gladly send you prepaid by parcel post a one- or two-dozen carton of any size of Edgeworth Plug Slice or Edgeworth Ready-Rubbed for the same price you would pay the jobber.

which went well with his lean figure; it was the same sinister grace which one sees in a stalking cat. While he was crossing the interval between the blacksmith shop and the general store, that cat-like limberness persisted in spite of his high-heeled limp and the clumsy swathing of the cartridge-studded belt which sagged about his waist. There was something feline in the light which played upon his shallow eyes.

Constable Tinkham had reduced his bit of shingle to a little heap of curled shreds. He closed his jack-knife with a snap and thrust it into his pocket.

"Reckon I'll go down to the corrals," said he. "I promised I'd turn them mules out before noon."

Old Beaver, who was standing on a cracker box with his arm full of canned tomatoes, nodded without looking around. He heard the constable's footsteps receding toward the doorway. A moment later the resounding report of a heavy caliber revolver brought him off of the cracker box in a backward leap. The tomato cans thumped noisily on the floor about his feet, and his right hand was groping futilely beside his thigh when a rasping voice came through the smoke wreath which was drifting into the doorway:

"Put 'em up."

While he was thrusting both hands above his head, he saw Tinkham's limp body before the entrance. Through the thinning cloud of powder smoke he recognized the slayer.

"Jack Slade." The voice of Beaver was heavy with bitterness as he uttered the name. Then he cursed himself and his forgetfulness with heartfelt fervor.

The murderer laughed quietly. To do his killing and to ride away had been the extent of his expectations, but now he found himself in command of a situation which promised richer satisfaction than mere bloodshed. His restless eyes swept over the store's interior; they fell on a cluster of branding irons in a corner. His lips curled back before his white teeth.

"I shore have got it comin' to me," the old man was muttering.

"An' yo're goin' to get it," Slade told him from the doorway. "Come on out here, an' fetch that runnin' iron with yo'. When I get done with yo', folks are going to know who yo' belong to."

Several minutes later, having finished her last letter, Betty again thought of the kitchen stove.

When she came from her room into the little parlor something—it may have been the sound of voices—made her glance through the front window.

A fire was blazing in the street. Beside it stood a man whom she had never seen before. Another man, stripped to the waist, was standing, back toward her, before one of the posts which supported the store's wooden awning; both his arms were extended far above his head. A third form was lying across the sidewalk. For an instant she stared uncomprehending. She remembered having thought she heard a shot a little while ago. Then she recognized her uncle, and her eyes widened in horror as she discovered that the dead man on the ground was Tinkham.

At that moment, grown bolder perhaps because of the silence which had followed the revolver shot, one of the Mexicans appeared from behind the blacksmith shop and started to cross the street. Slade glanced up from the fire and his right hand swept from his thigh, bringing with it his revolver. The weapon spat a slender stream of flame that showed pallid in the sunlight. The bullet flicked a little puff of dust before the man. He turned and started back toward the blacksmith shop. The revolver flamed again. The Mexican shrank from another dust puff. Facing the outlaw now, he raised both arms above his head; and while he held that posture of supplication, the voice of Slade floated down the street.

"This is a — of a time to put up yo'r hands, hombre." The bad man was smiling as he pulled the trigger. The Mexican pitched forward and lay face downward in the dusty roadway. Slade replaced his pistol in its holster. "Now, Beaver," he said lightly, "I'm goin' to put my mark on yo'."

From the window Betty saw his lips move. What the words were she did not know, but when he withdrew the iron from the fire, the thing which was in his mind flashed upon her. Her face was very white; but a light had come into her widened eyes that was harder than the light of horror. She rose swiftly from the window and ran into the dining-room.

Beaver's revolver had looked very large to her and its formidability had frightened her a few minutes ago. Now to her eyes it seemed to have shrunken sadly, and as she reached for it she was assailed with a sudden doubt. If there were only some weapon which would be deadlier in her hands!

Her mind went to a little closet at the end of the room and the horror of a discovery which she had made there a day or two ago came back to her; but it was not horror now. She flew to the door, flung it open and dragged forth a sawed-off shotgun.

Her lips were moving as she ran back into the front room.

"If I can only do it!" She said the words over and over. She was saying them as she knelt before the window and rested the clumsy weapon on the sill.

Jack Slade had heard something which made him step back from Beaver to look toward the turn of the road where it entered the little town. He stood with the smoking iron in his left hand and his right hand on his six-shooter, hearkening intently, when the girl's eyes found him across the leveled barrels. So she saw him holding the iron, leaning slightly forward.

Then she clenched her little teeth and pulled the trigger.

The recoil struck her like a heavy fist. When she recovered her balance the shotgun was on the floor. Her cheek was throbbing from an ugly bruise. Through the blue fog of the powder fumes she saw the outlaw lying motionless on the roadway. Then with a little moan which trailed off into a fluttering sigh, she sank down on the floor beside the smoking weapon.

When Curt Wilcox raced his pony in from the turn of the road, he noted that his bullet had struck Slade fairly between the eyes. In that he found nothing to marvel at. It was over the opportunity to fire the shot that he was wondering.

"He had me dead to rights," he told Beaver while he was untying the latter's bonds. "He'd heard me coming and was throwing down on me when I rode round the corner into the street. I never would have had a chance to pull my gun if some one hadn't spoiled his aim by turning loose that shotgun. Who do you reckon it was anyhow?"

But Beaver had no answer for his question and it was Ma Smith who enlightened Curt some minutes later. She met him at the front door and the harshness of her features was somewhat mitigated by various unusual emotions.

"Betty," she told him, "is inside. Yo' better go in and see her."

He drew back and shook his head. "She wouldn't speak to me." His voice was dull with hopelessness. "I have done another killin' now."

There was a curious mingling of grimness and feminine softness in Ma Smith's smile. "That is jest what I want yo' to tell her," said she. "I can't make her believe she missed him with my ol' man's shotgun."

"She fired that shot?" Incredulity was in his voice.

Ma Smith nodded. "She done her best to kill that rattlesnake out there. Go in an' talk to her. She understands a heap more than she did."

"A YEARN
hunting
way out
float. W
the crud
My stor
was a co
my body
then, di
two mor
better th
every 'le



"SOME FEW YEARS AGO I ate Yeast for bacterial infections, boils and carbuncles. Within three weeks my infections disappeared and I have never been troubled since. But I have an especial message to mothers. Four children were born to me in four years, and they are perfect babies and I am a good specimen of a healthy mother—thanks to Fleischmann's Yeast. Not only did it settle my stomach, when other things failed, but it also toned up my system, and gave me an appetite, which is most essential in motherhood."

THEODOSIA HESSON, R. N., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Now they are really well



"A YEAR AGO two friends and myself went on a hunting trip into an arid region of Mexico. On our way out we picked up a piece of rich, gold-bearing float. We stayed nine weeks prospecting—living on the crude supplies the country afforded—and hope. My stomach was weak from abuse. My bonanza was a coarse, irritated skin—a breaking-out all over my body. I used a horde of 'positive cures' and then, discouraged, tried Fleischmann's Yeast. In two months I was as I am today. My skin was better than 'back to normal' and I was ready for every 'let's go'." V. C. SPIES, Barrett, Cal.

Vital, joyous, certain once more of their power, thousands have found the way to glorious health through one simple food.

NOT a "cure-all," not a medicine in any sense—Fleischmann's Yeast is simply a remarkable fresh food.

The millions of tiny active yeast plants in every cake invigorate the whole system. They aid digestion—clear the skin—banish the poisons of constipation. Where cathartics give only temporary relief, yeast strengthens the intestinal muscles and makes them healthy and active. And day by day it releases new stores of energy.

All grocers have Fleischmann's Yeast. Start eating it today! Buy several cakes at a time—they will keep fresh in a cool dry place for two or three days. And let us send you a free copy of our latest booklet on Yeast for Health. Health Research Dept. K-31, The Fleischmann Company, 701 Washington Street, New York.



EAT 2 OR 3 CAKES regularly every day before meals: on crackers—in fruit juices or milk—or just plain. For constipation especially, dissolve one cake in hot water (not scalding) before breakfast and at bedtime.



"FOR SIX YEARS I was ailing, nervous and depressed, interested in nothing, accomplishing nothing, rarely for twenty-four consecutive hours free from pain—all caused I know by intestinal putrefaction. At last I asked a nurse if there was anything in the 'yeast fad?' She assured me there was. I began eating daily three cakes of Fleischmann's Yeast. Relief from constipation and pain followed. I continued to take it as a tonic and food, regaining strength and energy and the long-discontinued compliments on my complexion. Today I am vigorously well, praise be to Fleischmann's Yeast."

KATE D. MEARES, College Place, S. C.



This is the new way to finish a shave

WHEN you wash off the lather after shaving, you take away some of the skin's natural moisture. To keep your skin pliable and free from irritation, you must conserve its natural moisture.

It is the dry skin that chaps and cracks. So, after shaving don't leave the skin totally unprotected. Don't put on powders which absorb moisture. *Help the skin retain its own natural moisture.*

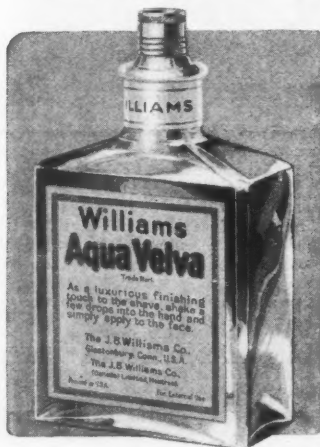
Aqua Velva is a new preparation made by us expressly for this purpose. *It conserves*

the skin's moisture. After shaving just pat on a few drops:

- it tingles delightfully when applied
- it gives first aid to little cuts
- it protects the face from sun and wind
- it prevents face-shine
- it delights with its man-style fragrance

Thousands of men are now keeping their faces soft and comfortable in this new way. Try it. A 150-drop test bottle will be sent you *free*. Use coupon below or postcard.

The large 5-ounce bottle at your dealer's is 50c. (60c. in Canada) Costs almost nothing a day—only a few drops needed. *By mail postpaid on receipt of price if your dealer is out of it.*



Williams Aqua Velva

for use after shaving

By the makers of Williams Shaving Cream

FOR FREE TEST BOTTLE

Address: The J. B. Williams Co., Dept. 98, Glastonbury, Conn. (If you live in Canada, address The J. B. Williams Co., St. Patrick Street, Montreal)

Send free test bottle of Aqua Velva

Form 8-25

98, A Millionaire—And Still Working

(Continued from page 45)

him it would be his sure death. "I'll die if I don't get outdoors," he told her. "Go get my coat and bundle me up and take me out."

Nobody in the world but John R. Booth could have made that nurse do that. Somehow or other he did, and at noon that day when his son came home the old gentleman was ensconced in his chair in the clear, cold October air, reading his paper and smiling. A few weeks later he was down at his mills putting about again.

It was about this time that he gave up smoking. For fifty years he had allowed himself three cigars a day—one after each meal—but at eighty-eight he figured he might as well quit this foolishness. He had never drunk at all, so he didn't have to stop that.

It was along about then, too, that he stopped hard work and started to take things easy. There were other changes in his life as well. For one thing, his sons prevailed upon him to give up driving his own horse. He had had a runaway and was thrown out and hurt when he was over eighty, and after strenuous pleading on the part of his family, he was prevailed upon to let a man ride in the buggy with him and do the actual driving.

But year after year he refused to acknowledge the motor-car. Finally at ninety-six he took his last ride behind his faithful horse and regrettably consented to a car—a car with the windows open so the clean, life-giving air and sun of Ontario could flow through. Now at ninety-eight he rides long hours in his motor-car, seldom less than fifty miles a day, and altogether never spending less than six to eight hours in the open, driving or walking about his mills.

In the summer-time he almost doubles that. Last year at ninety-seven he had his private railway car run up to the North Woods and shunted off into his own great timber lands, and for two months he reveled in the work he loves more than any other in the world. He's repeating it this year at ninety-eight—just as he has been doing for the last twenty years.

After all, this old man is an epoch figure. Born on a poor little farm in Quebec Province, twenty-four miles north of the Vermont border, on April 5, 1827, he left home at twenty-one with nine dollars as his worldly possessions. Going into the States, he worked for two years building wooden railway bridges on the old Vermont Central. Then he returned to Canada and married, and at twenty-three drove, with his bride, three days across country to the struggling little frontier town of Ottawa, then called Bytown.

That was seventy-five years ago. And in those seventy-five years he has seen a half-world conquered and planted with men.

I doubt if any man has ever lived in the whole history of the world who has seen such epoch deeds performed. The Booth saga is a tale of wonder and adventure and man-made miracles—that Homer would have given half the strings of his lyre to have sung.

The axes of his men have cut down 5,000 square miles of timber. He himself has built 400 miles of railroad and established steamer lines on the Great Lakes. He has seen a vast continent awaken and take life. He has seen Canada change from a primeval colony of England to a great and rich self-governing Dominion. He has seen the United States add 100,000,000 to the 12,000,000 of his boyhood.

A thousand times men have told him he would fail in his dreams of building up Canada. Always he has gone on and on. They used to call him "Pine Crazy" Booth, when thirty and forty years ago he was buying up thousands and thousands of acres of raw timber. "Our mill will be running when all the others here are closed," he would answer. And today the only

What Princesse MARIE de BOURBON believes about the care of the skin

"No WOMAN'S SKIN need fade if she faithfully uses Pond's Wonderful Two Creams. They protect and keep the complexion perpetually young and beautiful."

Marie de Bourbon

ALTHOUGH this extraordinarily lovely young woman—cousin to the King of Spain, Princesse of the Spanish branch of the old, illustrious, royal House of Bourbon—has, in Spain, the position and protection accorded to members of a royal house, being a democrat, she has chosen to come and live in more liberal America.

Naturally this young princesse regards her jasmine-white skin as important. She knows its delicate bloom must be watched over, tended. In seeking the best of all ways to care for it she found the Two Creams which—with their gentle cleansing, their soft protection and finish—meet the fundamental needs of the skin.

Pond's are these two Creams and lovely women everywhere are using them for their delicate skins, today.

How the Princesse Marie does it

First, a daily cleansing with Pond's Cold Cream. Once a day, at least, oftener if you have been out in the sooty air, or the wind and sun, smooth it liberally over your face and neck. Its pure oils will bring to the surface the dust and powder which have clogged the pores. With a soft cloth take it all off. Repeat the process, finishing with a crisp little rub with ice or a dash of cold water. Your mirror speaks volumes now, of cleanness, of glowing health.

Next, a lovely finish with Pond's Vanishing Cream. Smooth on a light film. This delicate greaseless cream takes away the hateful shine, gives your skin a clear, lustrous tone, makes it just satin. And how it holds your powder, which goes on next! It's a protection, too, against the weather, guarding your sensitive skin from winds, sun and city dust. So, always before powdering, and especially just before going out, remember to smooth on a feathery film of this light cream.

Try, for yourself, this method which the world's loveliest, most aristocratic women are following. Use Pond's Two Creams, and you will agree with the Princesse Marie de Bourbon—"they keep the complexion perpetually young and beautiful." The Pond's Extract Company.



EVERY SKIN NEEDS THESE TWO CREAMS



Charlotte Falch

THE PRINCESSE MARIE DE BOURBON

Instead of the dark beauty one associates with Spanish women she has beauty of a type rare in Spain—Titian red hair, green-blue eyes, and a patrician white skin with the delicacy of the jasmine flower.

An aristocrat by birth, she belongs, furthermore, to that larger aristocracy of beautiful women who know that true distinction of appearance depends upon taking the utmost pains with the details of the toilet, among which the care of the skin should always have first place.

FREE OFFER: Mail this coupon and we will send you free tubes of these two creams and an attractive little folder telling how to use them.

The Pond's Extract Company, Dept. H
141 Hudson Street, New York City

Please send me your free tubes of Pond's Cold and Vanishing Creams.

Name.....

Street.....

City..... State.....



It's Easy to Can -if your Range has a RED WHEEL

FRUITS canned right in the jars—in the oven of a gas range equipped with a Lorain (RED WHEEL) Oven Heat Regulator keep their fresh color, firmness and flavor. With this method of canning there is no tiresome watching, no heavy lifting, no steam in the house.

The Lorain Red Wheel is found on the following six famous makes of Gas Ranges: Quick Meal, Reliable, Clark Jewel, Dangler, Direct Action, New Process.

LORAIN OVEN HEAT REGULATOR

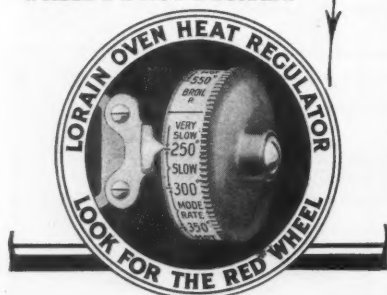
Lorain-measured oven temperatures make every baking day "lucky" and enable you to cook Whole Meals in the oven for hours without watching.

Send a postcard asking for a copy of the 1925 Lorain Oven Canning Chart.

AMERICAN STOVE COMPANY
Largest Makers of Gas Ranges in the World
1122 Chouteau Ave. • St. Louis, Mo.

One easy turn of the Lorain Red Wheel gives you a choice of any measured and controlled oven heat for any kind of oven cooking or baking.

Unless the Regulator has a RED WHEEL it is NOT a LORAIN.



great sawmill running in Ottawa is the J. R. Booth Mill. 4

A dozen times doctors have told him he must die—but he has refused to take orders. By sheer will and common sense he has made life accept his terms.

As I was saying good-bye to him, he said to me: "I am doing something this year that I have never done before—I am not answering in my own hand the birthday greetings sent me. I thought when I had reached ninety-eight

I would let the boys in the office write out the acknowledgments on the typewriter and I would just sign them."

I couldn't help it; I reached out and put my arm around his shoulders. "I will be coming back in a couple of years to see you," I said.

"That will be fine," he answered. "I'll be waiting for you."

And I'll bet he will—an even century and still punching the clock and laughing at the doctors' orders.

We Knew Him When (Continued from page 74)

since the bout three years back with the Oregon Kid in New Jersey. His mouth was slightly twisted of lower lip—that harked back to a recent Fourth of July meeting with Blackface Ganz when the latter went off the platform on a stretcher at the end of the sixth round. One ear was cauliflower too since that event. But Pike's share of the gate receipts and purse had been thirty-two thousand dollars. Many men would trade perfection of a lip or an ear for that sum.

And as beauty aids he wore two large diamond rings, ruby-set cuff links, a malacca stick and a broad, cocky, I-am-the-Baby smile that half annoyed, half pleased the town.

With swagger and gloat Pike had redeemed himself and his folks. He had conquered life, money and the fourth estate. Some feat! He had joined therefore an immortal caravan which began with Moses and has taken in Columbus, Figg, the Smith brothers, Mary Pickford—oh, the long lucky line!

He brought his mother a georgette dress and a wrist watch, his brothers cigars and silk underwear and his father a motor-car that had been used only twenty-two thousand six hundred and nine miles.

The first day a procession of small boys led the way to the City Hotel where Pike and his retinue were finding rooms, telegraph blanks and an ice-box. Later the older citizens formed a queue to congratulate and shake hands and welcome. Pike accepted all welcome in the spirit in which it was outthrust. "Listen, Al!" he said affably to his manager, "I just dragged you along on this hick trip to make you acquainted with folks that used to threaten every day to send me to a reform school."

Julia Blatchford and Myrick were sauntering up Third Street when the yellow car shot down it, throwing dust in their eyes. In the beginning, perhaps of the two Julia was the more interested in the absentee's return. Rather fascinated, her blue eyes took in agape the yellow richness of tonneau, the lapis lazuli speed box which streaked after, the press representative stretching back to look at Julia's daffodil cloud of hair.

"It's a wonder he wouldn't build his folks a better house if he can afford that kind of car," she said decidedly. "I'd know him anywhere. Wouldn't you? He never was nice looking. But he's cleaner than he used to be."

Myrick agreed. "Old Pike that old Hatton used to jaw at! Well, I'll say he got where he set out to get."

"This is a funny world," said Julia with a little sniff.

That evening Myrick telephoned Julia about eight-thirty.

"Mind if I don't drop up tonight, Jule? A crowd of us are chinning down at the City House with Pike."

Julia did not mind. She wanted to wash her hair anyhow. Moreover, Julia knew that it would be interesting later to get from a first hearer a more or less spicy report of the pugilist's sayings and doings.

Myrick reported in some amusement. "You should hear him, Julia! Cash, girls, cars, fists, gumption, tailors—according to him he's oversupplied with all."

Julia turned up her nose.

"He would," she said.

"But he's got tendons and a waist," Myrick went on with genuine admiration. "While he's

at home he's offered to teach us fellows to box and keep ourselves in physical condition."

Already Pike had met all his town socially; in living-rooms, on porches and lawns, in various family cars. Speaking of cars, one was needed to convey Pike's mail from the post-office to the City Hotel where he kept a room as well as at his unsightly home. It was a queer, startling token of Pike's success—that heaped mail. There were many envelopes in feminine handwriting; pink, white, lavender, gray, many scented, many on the best grades of linen paper. Pike and Al Ducey were seen more than once to chuckle ostentatiously over opening epistles.

"And that's one reason I don't much thank him for saying he'll be sure to look Willy up when he stops over in New York," said Grace Huck sharply. "Women are so queer!"

Grace's worries were not Julia Blatchford's. But the latter had her own reason presently for turning cold, condemning ears to any mention of Pike's mail.

There had been two evenings when Myrick, all enthusiastic interest in an old mate's success, had brought him along for music and conversation on the Blatchford porch. And Julia had daffodil colored hair, it must be remembered—a lovely soft cloud that had never been bobbed. Besides, Julia's once chubby profile had developed that white line of beauty already mentioned. Pike met her coming down Third Street alone one brilliant midsummer afternoon.

She was bareheaded. Julia disliked a hat. She carried instead a white silk parasol.

Pike turned and walked beside her. "Say, Julia," he said without preamble, "I don't mind telling you that all this country's peaches aren't in the one Broadway basket."

"No?" said Julia calmly.

"Not at all." His forefinger and thumb took gentle but firm hold of her bare elbow. The two digits began to manipulate her soft flesh, Pike walking closer beside her than was necessary; so close indeed that his shoulder pressed hers. "You are—say, let's take a ride together tonight! And let's not spill it to everybody!"

"Oh, why—" Julia was beginning with some attempt at courteous refusal, wriggling from the thumb and forefinger.

"We'll make it late, around ten, say? So I'll have a chance to shake Al who hangs after me night and day because he says the town's so slow he can find nothing else to do. Some boy, Al. He's got his eye on you too, but I say 'Lay off, Al; it's my car and I have first choice of rides in it.' By the way"—his smile was intensive—"it's a riot of a juice wagon, isn't it? Girl who works in the Follies—got hair like yours, Jule!—picked out the color for me."

The digital pressure on her elbow was such as to signify frequent and not too discriminatory practise. Speaking, Pike had once or twice allowed his voice to drop. Kindly as it were. Indeed, one thought fleetingly of a person called Cophetua.

With a distasteful wriggle of her whole body, Julia proved that she had a certain understanding of life. She pulled her elbow away. "Keep your fingers off me, Pike," she commanded. She put a foot of sidewalk between him and herself. "And I'm not greedy, Pike. I'll let some one else have the ten o'clock ride."

Pike's intensive smile faded. "Ye-eh? I s'pose you can't forget, Miss Julia Blatchford, that my folks live 'across the tracks.' Say, let

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(577-A)

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me tell you, outside this burg there's smarter people that are not so darned hidebound—"

Julia merely walked on. Although annoyed, Pike proved that he was not utterly downcast by her snub. Coming out of Sobel and Pratt's, ten minutes later, Julia saw him standing across the street laughing with his malacca stick crooked in the arm of Loretta Huck, Grace's black-eyed, too knowing fifteen-year-old sister. Loretta was gigglingly excited.

Julia said nothing to Myrick of the day's incidents. "There is no need to tell men everything," she observed to her sister Marian, in whom she had speedily made confidence.

"N-no," admitted Marian, who had been happily married several years. "News isn't always good for men."

"It's like starch for babies," said Julia firmly. "Their systems can't always manage to take care of it sensibly."

"Well—yes."

"And if Myrick punched Pike he might get hurt. His muscles aren't scientifically trained."

"They say," said Marian severely, "that a Follies girl writes to him. And a Russian actress once jumped into the ring at the close of a fight to kiss him. Besides all sorts of women. Theo told me."

"I don't care anything about that," said Julia indifferently. "Marian, if you were me, would you take money or a dining set from Grandfather Cleaver for a wedding present? He asked me last week which I'd rather have."

Marian was of wavering opinion. Julia laid the question away to be put later to Myrick. But she postponed putting it for a week or more, and then that happened which pushed trivial questions grimly in the background.

Of a late August afternoon which was as tranquil as a meadow of buttercups, Myrick telephoned Julia that he had something to tell her. Over the small town's wire his voice came staccato and important.

Ten minutes later he took the Blatchford porch steps two at a time to Julia waiting gracefully in a porch swing, her feet crossed, a silk stocking and a needleful of silk thread in her hand.

Myrick's face was a warm red, and his eyes were over-bright.

"Julia!" This in a cry as he impetuously gained the top step. "What do you think! Pike Hoffman had a row with Al Ducey—that fellow that's his manager, you know—and he wants me to take Al's place!"

"Why, Myrick!"

It was an exclamation of startled dismay. That expectant, pleasant expression which had been not unbecoming on an unpremonitive girl's happy face was wiped off as if by a cold-blooded hand. Julia dropped to the porch floor the silk stocking whose run she was mending.

He dropped into the swing beside her, flung a rapturous young arm about her shoulders. He was too engrossed at first with his own news to mark her acceptance.

"He really does! He says he always liked me better than the other boys and I've been around him enough this month to catch the ropes—he says anyway he doesn't really need a business manager any more than a baby needs three thumbs. He can attend to most of his own business whether a ten cent piece or a ten fights contract is concerned. But it's more convenient to have someone trailing along as business representative. But Al's been cheating him bowlegged, he says; on gate receipts as well as expense account. Grafting gasoline even on the side, too. And he knows I'd be some one he could trust—"

"But of course you're not going!"

Her basket of thread went rattling, rolling, unwinding, to the floor. A dangerously high pink was coming into her face.

His amazement at her question was unaffected. "Why shouldn't I go? The other fellows are off their heads with envy. It's the chance of a lifetime!"

"Chance!" she wailed.

"What do you mean, Julia? Have you any idea what percent of Pike's earnings Al Ducey got? In five years I'll make more money, Pike

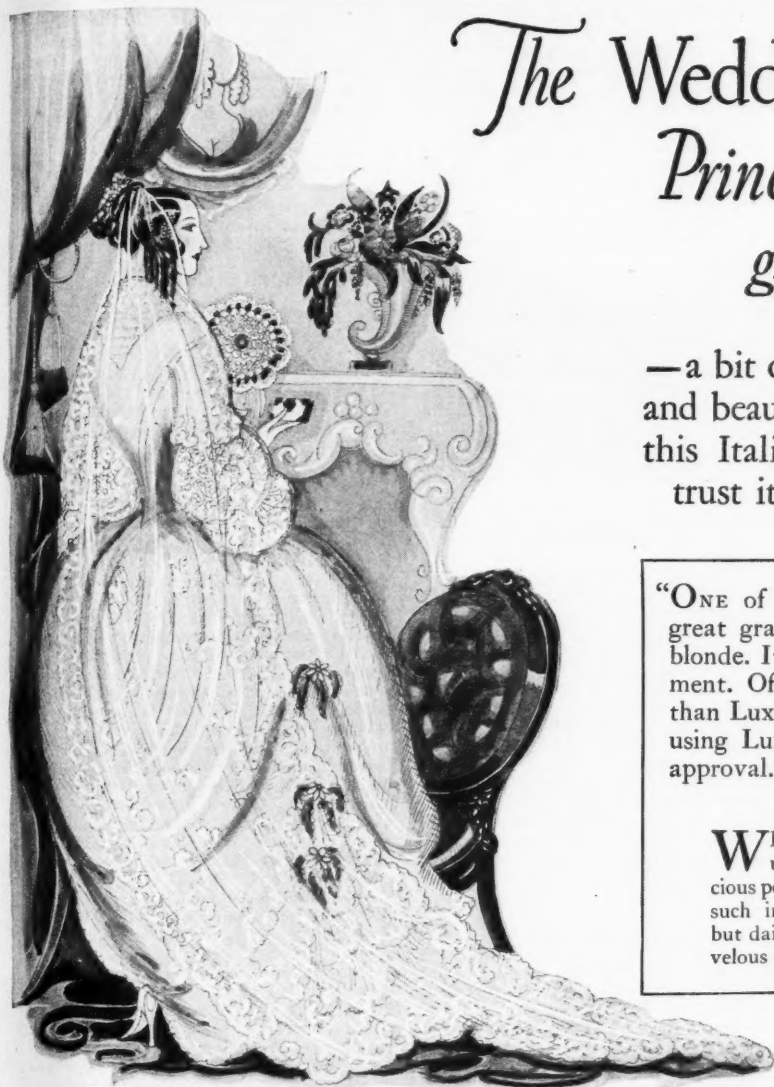
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says, than I might in twenty here at home."

"I—I don't care a great deal for money, Myrick," said Julia rather faintly.

"Say! You know that isn't so. And anyway if you don't care I've got intelligence enough to know that it's as handy around a family as soap in a bathtub." He laughed.

She sat motionless in the swing. Presently: "I don't care for Pike's offer, Myrick. Really I don't. I—I'm going to ask you to turn it down."

She spoke unsteadily.

"And why?" His arm about her shoulders became rigid.

"We've got everything planned to—to live on here! At home. We couldn't help but be fairly happy. And you remember your grandfather was nearly——"

"Nearly! You said it, Jule. Nearly!" "You might not get along well with Pike—after you went."

"I could come back, couldn't I? Or possibly I'd be in touch with other openings."

"Your father says he doesn't know how he got along without you in the office. And he says that new interurban——"

"I guess he'll get along without me. He did it for a good many years. See here, Julia: it won't be twelve months before I'll send for you——"

"Send for me?" Still she spoke unsteadily.

"I'd like first to get the hang of my work. And Pike says there'll be a good deal of coast to coast traveling this fall. He's got two Western dates. Al Ducey's going to sue him for broken contract, of course. Pike says he hasn't a leg to stand on in the suing, but it means a jump to New York to see a law firm. But, say by spring, Jule darling, I'll be fixed to take care of you. And so I'll be right back after you."

"By spring."

"Not a day later!"

She stared past a white pillar of the porch—past a strip of August-baked green yard. From there, she stared past the Marbury house across the street—stared west, beyond the sky and perhaps beyond the present, into a doubtful future.

"I wish you wouldn't go, Myrick."

"I don't exactly like your tone, Julia!"

"I'd rather—rather try life here."

"I'd rather hitch my wagon to a higher star!"

"I don't like Pike," she said with feeling.

"Some things about Pike I don't care a lot for." He said this reasonably. "But he's made his mark in the world. And there's cash and opportunity for me in his tracks. It's a chance!"

"I don't like his crowd. Theo told Marian that his trainer——"

"Eats with his knife, I s'pose. Well, I'll promise you, hon, I won't copy Pike's trainer's table manners. Cross my heart!" His arm tightened jocularly.

"I—I wasn't thinking of table manners." Stubbornly: "And that wasn't what Theo told Marian."

"What was it?"

Julia blushed. "Never mind what it was." Somewhat constrained, he did not press curiosity. Offhandedly: "Oh—well!—Julia, I think to you Pike himself stands in front of what he's become. You can't forget sixth grade——"

"My memory's not bad."

"You see, you're prejudiced. Pike told me himself he guessed some of this town looked at him through ten years back blinders. He didn't mean you in particular, I suppose. But I noticed you one day give him a cold shoulder."

"I'm not prejudiced, Myrick! And it isn't exactly Pike himself. It's—it's his surroundings—what you might become"—passionately. "His way of living!"

"'Fraid I'm going to stick my pink tootsies in black mud?"

"I don't want you to go with Pi——"

"See here, Jule—I hope you're not going to be one of those know-it-all, nagging wives."

"Oh!" She became quite scarlet. The color ran even down her neck to meet the white

pleated collar of her blouse. "I'm not nagging! Don't my wishes count with you, Myrick?"

Quite as passionately he returned: "Don't my wishes count with you? Haven't I a right to get all that's possible, according to my opportunities, out of life for the two of us?"

"But I——"

"Your judgment against mine!"

Sometimes that light carelessness which is the essence of youth slips away in a twinkling of time; in less than a second even. And so slight a thing it is, so nearly impalpable, that its going is not noticed until long afterward. But it never returns.

Myrick got out of the swing, stood in front of the girl.

With daffodil colored head flung back in unyouthful resentment, Julia had been first on her feet.

"My judgment against yours! Well——" So she began in passion. And then suddenly she put out both hands as if to hold back something which was going, which was gone. "Oh—oh, Myrick, I don't mean that! I don't want to quarrel with you. Never!"

Whereat Myrick flung his own offense aside and became unreasonably lover-like, considering the exposed condition of the Blatchford porch; its vines were irregularly and not too thickly leaved.

In the end, about the time her mother returned home from a round of calls, Julia had agreed, with tearless if somber eyes, that perhaps Myrick had come upon a splendid opportunity. And when he coaxingly asked if she wouldn't be a little nicer to Pike in the future, seeing that he was accepting the business connection, she promised. If the promise was reluctant, it was nevertheless given.

Pike's chauffeur was overhauling the cars for the champion's departure. Pike himself had begun to wear a keen, absent-minded look which had to do with future contracts, not with a visit to his home town. Myrick Cleaver was buying socks and a new trunk, aided by a mother of compressed lips and a sister who had eyes that were not pleased.

Julia Blatchford sat a good deal on the Blatchford side porch and swung without words. The expression on her pretty face touched forlornity when no one was in sight.

Pike Hoffman flashed past in his lemon-yellow car once or twice, and once she shook her fist at the cloud of dust in his wake.

She turned her promise over bitterly and for a while evaded any occasion which must result in its being kept or being broken. There came an afternoon when she turned it over calculatingly in her mind. Myrick was down at his father's office typing descriptions for abstracts. Half an hour previously she had watched him swing down the street.

It was an empty, indolent street. He had the swing of hope and a healthy young body and large aspirations. Also his light brown hair was the kind that other women might take notice of. Julia's eyes filled with tears that were partly temper and partly fear. After a while she went into the house and changed her dress for down-town.

She was too restless to spend the afternoon in a porch swing.

Pike's gaudy car was parked on Third Street. She passed it as he emerged from a cigar store and made for it. Under her parasol her daffodil colored head, bare to the August wind, inclined itself faintly at his ostentatiously respectful nod.

He was proceeding, paying no more attention to her, toward his destination. But Julia paused, raising her eyes to his as he stood opposite her.

It was a gentle, friendly look that she gave him. At times her eyes were youthful blue seas of mystery. But they could be soft and open too; like wood violets in an open stretch of field.

Pike paused, too.

"I hear you're going away soon, Pike," she said politely.

Pike Hoffman was one of those who recover quickly from surprise or discomfiture.



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"Few days. Going to miss me?" he wanted to know coolly, with his monogrammed cigaret held at an angle in his loose mouth which suggested that a past snub, mercilessly administered, had not been forgotten.

"I haven't seen much of you," she said with a polite intimation of regret. "You've really been here such a little while."

"Been here half the summer!" He could not restrain a certain surprise.

"Has it been so long! I watched you box the other day."

"Saw you. That grandstand"—with a grin—"isn't so large but what you can count the faces."

"You're awfully light on your feet, Pike," she gave tribute.

"Well, I'm not denying that. I've got a bank balance to prove my lightness of heel." His laugh was not so much vain-glorious as a reminiscent applauding of his own actual accomplishment.

"You're really wonderful, Pike," Julia had continued to look friendly up at him.

She shifted her parasol a little. On her youthful bare head the August sun blazed down. It turned daffodil color to a molten cloud.

"Guess you don't need peroxide, do you, Julia?" said Pike in involuntary admiration. "I know it's natural—because it's always been that color ever since you were four years old."

"I wish it was black," sighed Julia.

"What in the name of Solomon for?"

"Black is more beautiful than yellow."

"Think so?" His grin was significant.

"Guess there's nothing that hurts the eyes on your head."

"Oh—there's a worm on your arm, Pike!" She flicked it off the jade-striped silk sport shirt-sleeve. "No—it's only a bit of dead twig."

She glanced up. "These old trees!"

When Julia Blatchford talked to any person for any length of time she had a trick of half turning her face away. Her skin was firm, like an apple. Thus turned, the line of her cheek was a white line of absolute beauty.

Pike Hoffman threw away a half smoked monogrammed cigaret.

"Would—wouldn't you like something cool to drink or eat? A sundae?" He grinned. "I've got plenty of stronger stuff in my car—"

"Oh, I prefer a sundae!"

In the Consolidated drug store across the street, as if interested against her will, she played with fresh fruit in whipped cream while across a small walnut and marble table Pike described in detail how he attended to Black-face Ganz in six rounds.

"Could've made it four if I'd wanted to," he finished indolently and waved Harry Taft to keep the forty cents of change from a dollar bill for the sundaes.

"It's wonderful all you've done, Pike," admitted Julia with an indescribably sincere accent.

"Heard Myrick Cleaver's going to work for me?"

"Yes. I heard."

"Say, Julia, is there anything serious between you and Myr? Seen you pairing off a good deal together this summer."

Her glance came up quickly. With a small pink blush she waited until Harry Taft, callow and large-eared, had returned to the soda fountain.

She was then evasive. "Oh—you know how it is in a small town! We've paired off for a few years—that is—"

"Oh, I see! Not much else to do in this town but hold hands and pair around by turns, is there?"

"The town isn't so bad," she objected with some sharpness. "We know what kind of clothes both Lloyd George and Gloria Swanson wear—we see them every week on the screen. And for six months now it's been almost impossible to walk down Fourth Street on account of building materials heaped around."

"Bout eleven thousand dollars' worth of pressed brick tripping the whole county?" he

derided. "Say, once I made that much in two rounds."

"Did you?"

"Know how long a round is?" bantered Pike.

"No. Myrick Cleaver told me. But I've forgotten."

He told her again; holding out his wrist with its watch on a narrow black silk ribbon.

"Some money for the short time?" he demanded with pride.

She admitted that it was. As if interested against her will, she walked slowly up Third Street with Pike at her side.

Many other girls and women, doubtless, had listened to Pike's recital of his various exploits; many with the same attentive eyes and ears, and half parted lips. Julia Blatchford may not have been conscious that she possessed a certain advantage barred to many of her sex who had been born outside Ohiofield; even though some had been born in purple.

In a Broadway dressing-room five days later, a tiny Titian beauty pitched a sheet of somewhat uncultured writing across a litter of make-up jars to a graceful Greuze-like person who had the adjoining mirror.

"Listen! Pike's all puffed up like a poisoned pup because some yellowhair that lives in his home town has let him sit two nights running on her front porch."

La Greuze grunted and betrayed her knowledge of human nature.

"Some one who knew him when—I suppose! Ain't it a scream the way no matter how high you get in the outside world you can't forget those folks in your tank birthplace that used to be better than you?"

"Scream!" said Miss Titian with energy.

"It's a yowl."

But this far away breath of tattle had nothing to do with Julia Blatchford's tearful pillow. No one knew that it was tearful; least of all Marian Sobel, *nee* Blatchford. But Marian felt called upon to say once:

"Julia, what's Myrick doing these last few evenings?"

"His grandfather and his father asked him to finish up some stenographic work before he left. This makes three evenings he's had to stay at the office with them."

"How can you stand that Pike so much? And isn't he spending a good deal of money on candy for you? That was a ten pound box yesterday—"

"Oh, that reminds me, Marian! I must ask Grace if Loretta wants it. She said the other day Loretta never got filled yet with candy."

Marian said nothing more. In silence that was sharp, like a pin, she watched Julia change from an afternoon gingham into an evening organdy.

It was her second best organdy; gray piped with pink satin ribbon.

When it was hooked and its sash adjusted, Julia said in annoyance:

"Marian! I wish you wouldn't stare so at my back!"

Marian responded bluntly:

"Well, I'll say that even if another woman is your own sister, you never can tell what she's liable to do!"

Julia shook toilet water on her daffodil colored hair and left the room for the front porch. Pike's car was at the curb beyond.

And not quite two hours later Myrick Cleaver, running up the Blatchford porch steps, came to an amazed standstill on the top one.

Having come to a standstill, the blood first left his face and then came pouring back in an angry flood.

Pike was saying, in his nasal voice that carried distinctly clear across the night quiet of the porch:—"October sixth. Ye-eh, that's the fight date next. And my share of the gate receipts is due to be close to fifty thousand dollars, and whatever I am, I'm not cheap. Some girls have no neck for stones. But I'll say you have, Jule, and I'd like to spend forty thousand good dollars on a string of diamonds I once saw in a Fifth Avenue window—"

Lounging at one end of the porch swing,

Pike's back was toward steps and street. With one foot gracefully curled under her, Julia at the other end of the swing faced the steps and street.

Pike broke off and turned his head at the hasty steps and their cessation.

"Oh—lo, Myr!"

Myrick said, without returning the greeting:

"What's the idea, Pike?"

"Idea?"

The other crossed the porch in two furious steps, with one fist ready for action.

"What do you mean—buying stones for Julia! I'll let you know I want an explanation!"

"Myrick!" Julia was on her feet.

"Explanation?" repeated Pike. "Only one explanation! I like the looks of her white neck and I'd like to string it with—"

In a flash Julia was in front of one man, barring the way to the other who, astonished, was lounging up and out of the swing.

"Myrick, let me explain! Don't make a row so that people can hear—"

But Pike broke in.

"See here, Myr, I didn't know you'd have any right to complain! Honestly, I didn't! But at that I guess Julia has a right to make her own choice between the two of us—"

Myrick's arms dropped to his side. He turned hurt, puzzled, boyish eyes on her.

Whereat she said breathlessly: "Myrick, don't look at me that way! Pike's as—as silly as the color of his car! And if he chooses to think merely because I listened to him that I ever intended to let him buy me any presents—"

She snapped two fingers. "Silly!"

Pike's jaw dropped. Explosively he said:

"Well, of all—"

Julia's face was half turned from both young men. And the white line of her cheek, enhanced as it was by a flitter of moonlight on her soft hair—the two gazed hard.

In two pairs of eyes dislike which was mutual and reciprocal and devastating appeared, took on vitriolic intensity.

"It's within the limits of possibility that you didn't understand how the land lay, Pike," said the one finally. "I'll give you the benefit of the doubt."

Pike scowled a moment. Then he tried to put out a flame and pick up a dead coal or two of what had been a friendship, rare enough in an inimical world.

"Joke on me." He tried to speak naturally.

"After all the girls I know—had to come back here and make a monkey of myself. But it needn't make any difference between you and me, Myr? In a business way, I mean? It don't have to? Always had a funny liking for you—"

With dislike, that curious unappeasable male dislike which can take a man so utterly on certain dramatic discoveries, Myrick regarded the speaker.

His rather young lower lip twitched with anger at the question.

"That's off," he said curtly.

"Now, Myr, see here—"

"It's off, I said! And here's your cap, Pike."

Pike accepted it.

Julia stood, slim and watchful.

When Pike had departed, Myrick took a contrite step toward her.

"It's all my fault," he admitted. "I asked you to be nice to him. But—"

"Yes," murmured she with an indescribably sincere accent. "It was your fault in a way, Myrick!"

Regretfully: "I'm sorry, though! You've turned down what might have been a big chance—"

"That so?" He set a youthful chin pug-naciously. "Well—I'll take a big chance from some one else than Pike Hoffman. And I'd like to show him a thing or two—right here at home! And that State convention that Gramp's keen on my tagging to with him—"

Curled in her former seat in the porch swing, Julia glanced down regretfully at her second best organdy. If she had known this was to be the crucial hour, she would have worn, she reflected, her best one, which was daffodil colored.

A Chin He Loved to Touch by H. C. Witwer (Continued from page 96)

sporting fraternity, having won his last six bouts by knock-outs. This and the fact that Ben hadn't shown much around Gotham installed his rival a seven-to-five favorite in the early betting. So Benjamin went immediately into rigid training for the scuffle, as a victory over Bad News Nevins would advance him many rungs on the pugilistic ladder—might even mean a shot at the world's championship, with a soul-satisfying purse; win, lose or draw. I didn't see much of my Benny for the next few weeks, a hardship and don't think it wasn't. Being away from Manhattan for so long, I craved to go places, see people and do things.

Hazel joined her movie company over on Long Island, while I got busy with Jerry and Pete trying to sell ourselves back to the Hotel St. Moe. We used to call that inn "The House That Jack Built" because it cost two million to erect, and that's certainly a lot of jack, isn't it?

Apparently, my absence had left an aching void at the big hotel and being one of the manager's weaknesses I had no trouble landing at the switchboard again. In fact, I was welcomed like a breeze in Hades and I won a substantial raise over my former emolument, being put in charge of the board. Guests and employees alike greeted me with applause—I nearly said vied with each other—and when I reported for my first day back on the job, the switchboard was simply buried under flowers.

But though I was sitting nobby at the dear old St. Moe, Jeremiah Patrick Murphy and Peter Adolph Kift failed to click. As a house detective, Jerry couldn't arrest your interest let alone arrest a criminal, and Pete's weakness for strong drink was no asset, really. Their places at the hotel had been filled, and Mr. Williams, the manager, filed their applications in the waste basket. He liked 'em both the same way he liked the flu, anyway.

I'm no relation to Miss Fix-It, but Jerry and Pete are old friends of mine—synthetic big brothers and wild admirers who have often protected me from even wilder ones. So for old times' sake I went to the front for them. I had most of our influential guests comment to Mr. Williams on the absence of the former house dick and bell captain, as many times daily as they could and would think of it. I boosted them myself at every opportunity where it would do the most good, and within ten days Jerry and Pete were on the pay-roll again. The boys gave me due credit. They said our manager had heard they were going to work at another hotel and being afraid they'd take all the St. Moe guests with them, he'd gone on his knees and begged these master minds to come back. Warm puppy!

Nothing else worthy of entering in the log happened till a few days before Ben Warren was due to punch Bad News Nevins insensible, or just the opposite. Then Ben eased up on his training at the request of Jimmy Clinch, who said my athlete was getting too "fine" and he didn't wish him to leave his fight in the gym. So me and Bennah took an auto ride one Sunday out in beautiful Westchester, gobbling in great gulps of the glorious country air and dodging the "Sunday drivers" with their "four-wheels-no-brakes" flivvers. Honestly, you'd never think from Ben's deportment that in a couple of days he was to say it with five-ounce gloves against the best boxer he'd yet met in a ring. He was as happy as a kid in a jam closet and the only subject we didn't discuss was fisticuffs. Then, all of a sudden, in steps sorrow.

We're spinning along merrily when with a hoarse exclamation Ben yanks back the emergency brake without the slightest warning and I almost drove through the windshield. Before bawling him out, I peered over the hood to see what we'd nearly run over. A large black cat, fond of good living, as shown by its sleek corpulence, favored us with an indignant stare. Then it walked slowly across

the road with that bored, unhurried dignity that riches and royalty affect, but only cats and butlers possess.

Well, really, that Ethiopian feline scampering across our path was of no particular moment to me, but with Ben it was vastly different. Black cats were one of Ben's pet superstitions—all boxers believe in signs—and the near murder of that tabby greatly depressed him. He was satisfied bad luck would follow the incident and though I tried nobly to kid him out of his gloom, it was a case of no can do. In a moody silence, Ben drove me back to the classy and costly apartment I shared with Hazel and the instant we stepped into the living-room, it looked as though that ebony kitty had made good.

Jimmy Clinch stopped talking to Hazel and rose from his seat to greet us. Honestly, the face of Ben's manager was as long as a violinist's hair.

"I knew it!" whispers Ben mournfully, positive something was all wrong, even though he hadn't the faintest idea what it was.

Jimmy didn't hear him and seemed to resent my giggle. "Ben," says Jamesy solemnly, "we don't box Bad News Nevins—the fight's off!"

"I hope that infernal cat chokes!" snarls Ben, skimming his cap violently across the room.

"Which cat?" asks the astonished Jimmy. "What's the matter with you—are you gettin' dizzy?"

"Never mind!" says Ben. "Hurry up with the dope—why don't I box Nevins?"

"They claim he wrenched his shoulder in trainin'," explains Jimmy. "I just got the word and dashed right up here. The promoters want us to fight One-Swing O'Cohen instead of Nevins and they're willin' to slip us our original guarantee."

Ben slumped down on the couch beside me and nervously twiddled his thumbs, while me and Hazel patted his huge shoulders soothingly. Really, he seemed on the verge of tears.

"Another big chance shot to pieces!" he groans, his head in his hands. Then he looks up. "Who is this One-Swing O'Cohen?" he asks Jimmy, who's pacing the floor.

"A tough boy, but we can take him," responds James. "He can hit; still, he'll never win himself no Congressional medals for bravery. We should lay him like a pavement in a couple of frames—he don't like it. There's a fight we ought to grab, Ben."

"Let's don't and say we did!" says Ben irritably. "I contracted to fight Bad News Nevins and not something just as good. I've trained for weeks to get this shot at him and I'm not going in there and risk my hands on some set-up. I'll wait till Bad News Nevins's shoulder heals."

"Kayo!" agrees Jimmy. "But why not box the whole two of them false alarms? Why pass up this easy gravy? Lookit—we go in and push One-Swing O'Cohen over with a few rights and we get paid off. Then a coup'e weeks later we sock Bad News Nevins horizontal and once again the pennies rolls in. Another thing, Benny, a fight under our belt before we meet Nevins ain't goin' to do us no harm—I wouldn't fool you!"

Ben thinks this over in silence for a minute, while Hazel retires to doll up for a dinner date. My practically betrothed looks to me for advice and I agreed with Jimmy Clinch. While James does lots of things I don't like, he's nobody's fool and he'd been a great manager for Ben, really. He was shrewd enough not to overmatch Benny, was popular with the sport writers, drained the last possible dime out of the promoters' coffers and had built my sweetie up into a big drawing card. Also, Jimmy was as honest as a grand jury foreman should be. The worst thing I had against him was his habit of using the word "we" in speaking of Ben's fights—"We knocked him dead!" and "We'll cook this guy!" Honestly, you'd

think James went in and fought shoulder to shoulder with Ben against the other boxer!

"Do you believe this training accident to Bad News Nevins is on the up and up?" Ben asks him finally.

"It don't look kosher to me!" says Jimmy reflectively. "I think they're givin' us a run-around. Bad News Nevins is prob'ly money-mad and he maybe wanted twenty grand and the bottlin' rights to Niagara Falls before he'd turn a wheel. Them promoters is big-hearted fellows—they'd give you a straw hat in the winter any time. They laughed Nevins off and he claimed exemption—that's the way I got it figured."

"Well," says Ben, "I don't know. What I do know is that the bank roll is sadly in need of nourishment, so I'll box this One-Swing O'Cohen. I may as well tell you that I'm not enthusiastic about the match. This fellow is just a third-rate trial horse and defeating him will not boost my record to any great extent. On the other hand, a decisive win over Bad News Nevins would have put me in line for some big purses and some important bouts. Darn it all, what did Nevins run out for?" He looks over at me. "I told you that black cat would gum things up," he adds gloomily.

"Nonsense!" I say impatiently. "It was good luck, not bad! Here you're getting two fights for big money instead of one. Really, you should go back and stake that pussy to a bottle of cream."

Ben grinned. He's never low very long.

"And that idiot I fought a world's series of battles with on that train!" he laughs. "I let him ride me because I didn't want to injure my hands. If I'd only known then I wasn't to fight Nevins, I'd have ruined that fellow."

Well, three nights later Hazel, Jerry and Pete escorted me to view Ben Warren commit felonious assault on One-Swing O'Cohen. We had ringside seats as usual and got our first guffaw when O'Cohen was introduced by a bull-voiced announcer as "Heavyweight champion of the Caribbean Sea." After that, the laughs came fast and furious till the final one and that was hysterics itself!

As Pete Kift briefly and scornfully expressed it, all One-Swing O'Cohen had was his trunks and even though they were a brilliant purple they weren't enough. Mons. O'Cohen was plainly scared of Benjamin and he made no bones about showing it, to the bellowing rage and disgust of the frenzied fans who packed the club till the walls bulged out.

Before the echo of the bell had died away at the start of the first round, Ben was in One-Swing O'Cohen's corner pounding him enthusiastically about the body. Evidently too proud to fight, O'Cohen clung to Benny in a desperate embrace, ignoring the shrieks of the customers who implored him to take a chance. The referee slapped O'Cohen's shoulder vigorously.

"Git in there and mix it, you big banana!" snarls the official, contemptuously.

"Leave me alone—I'm busy!" grunts O'Cohen. Even Ben laughed.

My gentleman friend stepped away from this pacifist and after one short, critical look at him, floored him with a sizzling punch to the chin. Mr. O'Cohen rose to one knee and gazed morosely through the ropes at the howling mob while the referee counted up to eight. Then O'Cohen stood up, and as Ben rushed him, this peace-lover dropped to the canvas without being hit. That unseemly action infuriated the lovers of the manly art who paid \$16.50 a seat to see One-Swing O'Cohen butchered and dumfounded those who parted with the same amount to see him butcher Ben. He was quitting and they didn't wish him to quit—they wanted him battered to a pulp. The air was immediately rent with cries of "Fake!" "Kill the big bum!" "Throw 'at yallah tramp outa the ring, referee!" The angry referee warned O'Cohen that if he didn't get up and take some interest in his



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forthcoming execution he'd disqualify him. Ben's opponent thought that over for an instant and decided he wouldn't give the referee the satisfaction, so he jumped up and tore at Ben in a fury. Honestly, he convulsed the ringsiders with the ferocious faces he made at Ben as he capered wildly about, swinging with the aimless energy of a barn door in a gale. One-Swing O'Cohen, of the extremely conservative first name, was down either eight or seventeen times before the gong stopped the burlesque. But the only one badly hurt was the bilked attendance, who wanted O'Cohen's life.

"If this O'Cohen can fight, I belong on the Japanese throne!" sneers Pete Kift during the minute's welcome rest. "What's the percentage in Ben carryin' him along? Why don't he flatten him and let us go home?"

"It won't be long now, as Delia told Samson when she picked up her shears," says Jerry Murphy. "At round was the tip-off. Wait till Bad News Nevins gets the returns on this scrap—he won't wish none of Benny's game!"

Jerry was right—it wasn't long. The unmerciful bawling out he got from his seconds and the royal razzberry showered on him by the crowd had their effect on One-Swing O'Cohen. He became very serious and came out all business for the second inning of this pogrom. Instead of his previous clowning, he began to fight and in a furious rally he stung the good-natured Ben with a wild uppercut. Really, that's where our hero made a fatal mistake, because that punch annoyed Benny and he went to work on O'Cohen like a carpenter goes to work on his bench. Honestly, Ben did everything to his unfortunate playmate but remove his appendix, before a soggy sponge came hurtling into the ring from O'Cohen's corner. The referee held up Ben's hand and O'Cohen turned to his corner and presented his rescuers with a maniacal glare.

"Look how sore he is because they stopped the fight," says Pete Kift. "One thing—they punks like O'Cohen is game. They don't know when they got enough!"

One-Swing O'Cohen pushed off the first of his seconds who tried to help him to his stool. "Are youse guys asleep?" says this gamester irritably. "Why the Idaho didn't youse t'row in 'at sponge in the first round? I had ample then!"

The unmarked and unruffled Ben shook hands cordially with his vanquished rival and as he turned around, facing the crowd, I heard an amazed exclamation behind me. Glancing casually backward, I nearly fainted, no kidding. I was gazing into the astonished face of

the man Ben fought about sixty-four times on the train from Dodge City, Kansas, to New York!

Honestly, our former traveling companion didn't seem to be aware of my existence—his eyes were glued to Ben Warren in the ring and his face was a ten-reel movie! Apparently he'd come down the aisle and was going to take his seat when the bout ended and he'd immediately recognized in Ben his opponent of the train. The realization had just about put our late annoyance in a trance.

Ben walked to his corner, and in turning around, Hazel saw the man I was still staring at.

"For gossakes!" she breathes, thunderstruck with surprise. "Look who's here! So you remember Ben Warren, eh? Well, what do you think of him now?"

"Leapin' tuna!" gasps the man, ignoring Hazel. "So that's who he is, hey? Well, I'll be—"

Really, I've yet to hear the last of that sentence, because then the fun began. Benjamin had been peering over the ropes looking for me and Hazel and now he saw us, evidently in an argument with—of all people—the man who had insulted us on the trip East! With one leap Ben left the ring and landed beside us. Hazel promptly screamed. Highly interested sport writers and fans quickly surrounded us, milling about and shouting excitedly.

But their hope of witnessing an extra bout was dashed when I managed to grasp the furious Ben's arm and pant in his ear, "If you start anything with this fellow again, Ben, I'll never speak to you as long as I live!"

I'd had enough, really!

The crowd jostled us back and forth and a bull-necked, pockmarked gentleman stepping all over my feet yelled at some one over my shoulder: "Bad News Nevins would of got the same as O'Cohen had he been in there tonight!"

"You said it!" howls Jerry Murphy.

"Apple sauce!" bellows some Nevins admirer. Ben grinned and held out his gloved hand to his late adversary of the voyage from the Coast. "Let's call our war off—what do you say?" he asks cheerfully.

The other boy looked around at the eager crowd and then slowly returned Ben's smile.

"Jake with me!" he says. "You're a good boy, Warren. You ought to go far!"

"Thanks, old man!" says Ben as they shook heartily. "Eh—I didn't catch your name?"

Those closest to us shrieked with laughter and I thought the stranger was about to swoon.

"You mean you don't know me?" he gasps.

Still smiling, Ben shook his head.

"Hot dog—at's one for the book!" snorts the other. "I'm Bad News Nevins!"

An Ace in the Hole (Continued from page 43)

and a hundred times a day. Through every movement, every word, she proclaimed that here in her was a woman determined to recapture and hold fast, if only for a little time, a semblance of a happiness which life before this had refused her. About her there was revealed, betrayed rather, a wistful longing, a determination to seize on the passing and temporary shadow of something delectable even though the substance of it might never be hers.

The man could sense these emotions in her without in the least sympathizing with them. To him all this was an episode between acts, an incident of conquest, a pleasant but unimportant interlude. With variations it had happened before; he trusted it would keep on happening.

On the last night of their unhallowed, but to one of them altogether lovely honeymoon, the two sinners sat on their tiny veranda looking out into a gorgeous, amorous August moonlight. On the following morning they would separate and go their separate ways; that had been a provision of their compact as made at the outset. He had insisted upon it and she had agreed.

Probably their paths never again would cross. In fact, and privily, Mr. Girder meant to make

sure that they did not cross. He already was getting a trifle bored. He had not shown it, but he was beginning to feel it.

They sat there and between them a little silence befell and presently she said something to break it.

"Hal," she said, "there's a farewell favor I want to ask of you." He had told her, you'll recall, that his first name was Henry; she promptly had shortened it to the more intimate diminutive.

"Is that so?" he said, instantly apprehensive for no reason except that it was his nature to be apprehensive of trick and device. "Well, what's the favor?"

"I wish you'd tell me your name."

He swung in his chair and stared at her.

"Just what do you mean by that?"

"Your real name, I mean."

"You know my real name."

"No, I don't." She spoke as she always did

when she was deeply stirred, with little forced pantings between some of the words, like a runner who is out of breath, and she put one hand to her throat in a gesture grown familiar to him. "I'm sure your real name is no more Henry Harrison than that mine is Mrs. James Williams of Chicago. Mrs. James

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Williams of Chicago will vanish in the morning when I get on the Pullman. But I'd like to know who and what you are when you aren't Henry Harrison. I'd like to know where you live. You told me your home was Philadelphia, but I'm doubtful on that point, too."

His voice began to take on a harsh rasp. "Say," he demanded, "who's been prying into my affairs? Who's been putting you up to this?"

"Nobody has—I swear it." She took that fluttering hand of hers from her throat and laid it on his arm with a timid, caressing touch. "Believe me, it's not that. But, Hal, from the very first I've had a feeling—call it intuition if you want to—that you weren't telling me the truth about yourself. You know all or nearly all that there is to know about me—not that it's worth knowing or worth remembering, either—but all along I've been convinced that about your own self you were deceiving me. That's all that's behind what I'm asking you now. Is your real name Harrison?"

"Well, what if it's not?" he countered. "At least you know this much about me: I've got a wife and she's suing me for divorce. In my position can I afford to take any chances on having her find out that I've been hiding away up here with another woman? You bet your life I can't! And what's more, I won't. Let it go at that."

"Oh, please, Hal dear, don't say it like that," she pleaded. "Don't misunderstand me or my motives. You speak to me as though you actually suspected I might be one of those blackmailers that go about the country preying on men. I'm going to live up to the letter and the word of our contract. When we part tomorrow that's going to be the end of it, so far as you are concerned. You're not going to hear from me again by word or look or letter or telegram or message so long as I live. It's a promise and I mean to keep it and in your heart you must know I mean to keep it."

"Then why all this third degree stuff? Why not let well enough alone?"

"I'll tell you why. I'm grateful to you; I always shall be grateful to you. You've been so kind to me every minute, every hour, every day of this month that's ending tonight—so gentle, so considerate. Being here with you—just with you—has been the biggest thing that ever came into my life. It means so much to me—more than you'd guess, more than you'll ever dream, I expect. But—call it a whim, call it a piece of woman's sentimentality, call it anything you please—still I want to know what your real name is. I want to think of you afterwards as what you really are—as who you really are. Please, Hal, won't you tell me?"

"Yes," he said, "since you put it that way I believe I will."

She got up and stood behind him and drew both her arms about his neck.

"Thank you, Hal," she said simply. "I'm awfully glad you see it the way I do. And you'll never regret it—never."

For just a moment he had been swept off his feet. It may have been the persuasive spell of the night or the spell of her pleading—she seemed so very frail, so very appealing here in the soft white radiance of the moon—but for that one swift moment he meant what he had said. His impulse had been generous, compassionate. But with Mr. Girder generous impulses were like seed fallen on flinty soil. And immediately now, instantly almost, he repented of his pledge. And his suspicions quickened and were sharpened.

"In the morning," he said, "just before we tell each other good-by, I'll tell you who I am."

"That will be best," she consented.

Purposely he waited until she had gone to bed. Then, making sure that the connecting door between the two bedrooms was bolted, he made careful search of all his personal effects. If this were a trap, if she somehow had got a clue to his identity and sought now to confirm the evidence in hand, the secret behind her purpose probably lay here in some forgotten

paper wadded at the bottom of a pocket, in some laundry mark on his garment, some overlooked tag or label in his traveling kit.

So, very methodically, very painstakingly, he searched, and finally from where it was tucked down flat against the lining of a fob pocket, his probing fingers brought forth a calling-card, bearing a name and address.

He held it under the light and as he read what was engraved on it his eyes narrowed in perplexity. It was one of Billy Trench's cards. The address on it was the address of Trench's bachelor apartment. What then was it doing in his custody? That was the question. He puzzled, and then all at once he remembered.

Back in the spring after Trench had moved to new quarters and before their falling-out, Trench had scribbled on the back of a card his new telephone address and had handed the card to him and he had shoved it into this watch-fob where ever since it must have remained. He recalled the whole trivial transaction now and, recalling it, turned the card over and on its inner side found proof. In smudgy pencil strokes a telephone number was written there—the name of an exchange and the figures.

But had it remained there ever since? Had she, in some clandestine hunt through his wardrobe, discovered it and copied it and then had the wit to put it back again? And fortified by that information was she now, with some hidden motive at the back of her mind, setting a snare for him?

Presumably if she had read the card she naturally believed his name was Trench. Fine and dandy! If that was the way it was, why then just let her go on nursing her delusion. She was on the wrong track; she might as well stay on the wrong track until he had put a few hundreds or a few thousands of miles between them to confuse the trail and muddle the scent.

And being deceived, did she try to make trouble for Trench it wouldn't get her anywhere or anything. Trench would have an alibi; Trench was not married; Trench would be in position to give the laugh to any private detectives who might come snooping around. To — with Trench anyway—why should he care what might happen to Trench? In two months more he would be rid of Trench and good riddance, too!

So next morning when she had been bestowed aboard the car—he would take a later train for the south whereas she was starting west by way of Boston—he handed her a sealed envelop.

"In this envelop here is a card," he explained. "The name is on it and the apartment house number and the telephone number. You're not to open it, though, until after the train starts."

"Thank you, Hal," she said tremulously. She was paler than usual, even for her, and the little gasping note in her voice was noticeably accented. "I'll wait until then. I want it still to be my Hal that I'm saying good-by to."

Inwardly he greatly was amused to see how she held the envelop so tightly in her hand as though it were a most prized possession. Trust any woman, and especially any one of those sickly sentimental ones, to make about nine kinds of a fool out of herself whenever she got an opening!

Back in town, Mr. Girder bestirred himself those next two days. There was his reservation of passage to be confirmed, there was a dossier of memoranda and carbon copies of letters to be checked off against the negotiations with the French playwright Fleury whose work was making such a stir abroad. He held one conference—if an interview so brief and formal might be called a conference—with Trench. For a private talk with his office spy, that mousy little Miss Stein, he had more time.

"Well, how about it?" he asked. "What's our young friend been doing while I've been gone?"

"What could he do, Mr. Girder, in the fix

he's in?" She shrugged her narrow shoulders. "Still, at that, you ought to have some more inside dope on him," he pressed. "Tell me, just what is the low-down at this writing?"

And the informer told him: "Well, he's been trying to arrange for a loan of seventy-five thousand on his notes. He's tried several people. Nothing doing. Nobody will endorse for him, and if they did, I don't believe anybody else would let him have that much money or anywhere near it."

"Not a Chinaman's chance, eh?"

"No, sir, not a chance, the way it looks to me."

"There wouldn't be—for him. Well, what else? Shoot the rest of the good news, girl."

"His overdraft still amounts to six thousand, about. His bank's still carrying him, but they're getting impatient, those people over at the bank are. And that broker down on Broad Street is bleating something fierce for his due him. He's stalling the broker off. It looks like to me poor Mr. Trench is sewed up good and tight."

"Poor Mr. Trench—you said it. Poor fish would be better. Well, we'll give him all the line he'll take. Let him wriggle—he's hooked. I'll be back here about the first of October. No, I'll make it about the eighth or ninth when I get in. His option to buy or sell is up on the tenth, you'll remember. I'll just stroll in here bright and early on the morning of the tenth, ready to rake in the chips—all of them. You'll see things humming around here once I've given a certain party the air."

"I only hope you won't forget what I've done for you, Mr. Girder."

"Trust me, kid, trust me. Did you ever know me to fall down on any little job that I'd started to put through?"

"No, sir, I never have—not all the time I've been here."

"You never will. Just wait and see."

And he sealed the bargain with a kiss. Kisses didn't cost anything and they went further than dollars sometimes, and sometimes they led to other things.

Sure enough, Mr. Girder so timed his return sailing that he reached New York on the ninth. On the forenoon following when he entered the anteroom of Girder and Trench his manner was buoyant and uplifted and those cockles of that shrunken bull's-eye of a heart of his, the heart which would have made so difficult a target for any marksman, were pleasantly warm. Why shouldn't they be? In his breast pocket he carried the contract with Fleury which alone should mean a good many thousands a year in clear, clean profits for the successor to this firm.

He passed through the offices and without knocking opened a door and walked into Trench's room. Trench was at his desk, waiting for him apparently; he had sent a wireless on ahead from at sea.

Girder did not offer to shake hands. He stood in the middle of the floor, his legs straddled, his hands in his breeches pockets, his new English hat on the side of his head—an artist's model for a sketch to be labeled Confidence. Nor did he waste the minutes on preambles nor mince the words, either. He bored straight to the core of the issue.

"Well, here I am," he said briskly, "right on the dot. How about it?"

"How about what?"

"Need you ask?" His tone was shirred and flounced with a satirical contempt. "The ninety days are up today. You know that much, don't you? Well, then, do you buy me out or do you sell out yourself?"

"Oh, that?" said Trench. "Oh, I buy you out."

"You buy me out?" The shock knocked Mr. Girder's lower jaw down so that perceptibly it sagged.

"Yep, that's the idea—I buy you out." Trench was quite gay about it; so soon the jubilation had passed from one to the other of them. "The papers are ready—your lawyer has them. He has my check for seventy-five thousand, certified and made payable to your

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order. All you have to do now is sign a few times on the dotted line and you're out and I'm in—that is to say, you're out just as soon as you've handed over that contract and those other things that you've been cabling about from the other side."

"I don't believe it—there's something phony—there's—" For once in his life the apt-spoken Mr. Girder was at a loss for language fitted to express his thoughts.

"Oh, no, there isn't. Ask your lawyer. You look astonished. Well, I don't blame you for that. This must be a surprise for you. I guess you're wondering where I dug up the coin, eh? Well, I'm going to tell you. I didn't have to dig it up. It dropped in my lap. I inherited it.

"That jolts you too, doesn't it? I don't blame you for that, either. It jolted me. You didn't think I had any rich kinsfolk to up and die and leave me a nice fat stake? I haven't; that's the funny part of it; that's the joker in the deck. This money came to me through the will of a total stranger—a person I never saw in my whole life. Between ninety and a hundred thousand it comes to, after deducting inheritance taxes and fees and all—enough to pay off what I owe here and there around town and still have just exactly enough left to buy you out. It works out even,

almost, as you might say, to a cent, Girder.

"Of course I haven't actually got my legacy yet—there are still some court formalities to be gone through with, but on the strength of the fact that it's bound to come to me with no way for anybody to keep me from getting it, I've been able to borrow practically up to the full amount of it.

"Funny thing about that legacy, Girder. You'll be interested to hear about it. I thought it was a josh when I first got a telegram saying that somebody I'd never heard of had died out West and left me a hundred thousand in gilt-edge securities and bonds and stuff like that. But it wasn't a josh. Probably you won't believe this, Girder, but hard-pressed as I was I still think I wouldn't have taken this money if by taking it I was depriving needy relatives or dependents of what rightfully should have gone to them. Only, there weren't any such. This person I'm speaking of—this strange woman who left me all this money—was absolutely alone in the world."

"A woman?" Across his lolled jaw Mr. Girder dropped the words blankly. "A woman you never heard of, you say?" The light had not broken through on him yet, but the fog was stirring vaguely.

"Yes, a strange woman. It would seem she'd been dying of heart failure for a good

while. She knew it, too. She knew she couldn't get well and was liable to drop off any minute. She must have been game—she didn't go around telling people she was dying. She kept it to herself. Well, anyway, this woman went back home two months ago from a trip East and as soon as she got there she rewrote her will, leaving me this money but without a word of explanation except that she did tell her lawyer I'd understand why she was doing it. And just a week later to a day she dropped dead in the hotel where she lived.

"But when they sent me more particulars I began to understand; at least, I think so. Because I began to put two and two together. The place in the East where she'd just been visiting was Newport, or near Newport. And you went up to Newport on your vacation just about that time. And among her effects they found a card with my name on it and my address and my telephone number. I seem to remember having handed that card to you, Girder, back in the spring. Maybe when I tell you her name you'll know what it all means. Her name was Mrs. Mavis Levin, of Denver, Colorado."

Mr. Girder knew what it meant. As he stumbled out of Trench's office it meant that he felt very, very sick at his stomach.

Why We Have to Hit the Pace That Kills (Continued from page 51)

such interventions as filtered through the best of all possible secretaries. It does not include any of the telegrams, letters, contracts, statements, accounts and callers waiting in my outer room and inner consciousness for the stroke of three.

I do not mention ordinary routine, nor the fact that an author must read occasionally, and make notes, and set aside clippings, and see plays, and tabulate actors for future castings. I omit countless other activities that you would say were as common as shaving, though even that operation—which, I admit, is not necessarily related to success—occupies sixty hours a year.

To gentle readers who comment that I am an author and not a business man, and so do not utilize the advantages of system, I would remark that twice I have resorted to an efficiency expert. I have tried a down-town office—to separate selling force from factory—and given it up. Just after the production of "The Fool," when there were four companies on "the road" and one in New York, and when my mail averaged close to seven hundred letters a day, that office held two secretaries, two typists, three filing clerks, a bookkeeper, an office boy and a general manager. In addition, that year I had my personal secretary at home, and less personal secretaries in Boston and Chicago.

Of the *ungentle*, who sneer that I am a business man and not an author, I would inquire, "Aren't we all?" All authors who have achieved any degree of prominence and popularity—or *ever did*—from Shakespeare to Owen Davis? Of successful authors, only the enviable John Bunyan seems to have composed in composure, and his solitude was not achieved but thrust upon him.

Business and being busy, however, are not the chief reasons for dreaming of a nice, remote lighthouse—with modern plumbing and artillery. If, lucky reader, you have done important work and done it well and profitably, without having become a cinder in the public eye, you probably know little of the number, variety and persistence of the two-legged pest.

Classified broadly, pests include members of George Ade's "I-Knew-Him-When" Club, "bugs," lion-hunters, would-be collaborators, friends of would-be collaborators, would-be actors, friends of would-be actors, distant relatives and some not so distant, self-made pals, committee-formers, anthology-compilers, advocates of free speech (if you'll make it), people who want you to work free for the

babies' milk fund or their own, people who believe that charity begins at home (*your home*) and that the purse of the well-known man must be inexhaustible, people with suggestions for improving your play, advice-seekers, easy telephoners and ready letter writers.

I *don't* include autograph hunters, because the man who says he isn't flattered by a request for an autograph is a liar. (It's humiliating, afterward, to find what signatures like yours bring in the open market—but that's no one's fault. I've found better men than I quoted in the trade magazines at ten cents each, or fifty cents the half-dozen!) But even my tenderness toward autograph hunters had a set-back last week, when my signature, on one of the regulation cards, was returned to me through a box office with the addition above it of an order for two complimentary seats.

Sometimes, when you're tired and nervous and have seen more thousands of meaningless people than usual, the world seems a sort of pit in which you are surrounded by floating phantom faces, while a Niagara of words tumbles upon your aching head.

Escape is hopeless. I've swum out to sea for quiet and cogitation and been pursued by a faster swimmer with a stale stock of bromides. The late Victor Herbert had a sound-proof study built into his town house—but the son of a neighbor discovered that he could toot a saxophone down the ventilator.

Twenty years ago we located the equivalent of our lighthouse—my wife and I. A half-acre on the sea, with silent hills behind, and, before us, skimming gulls, and a water-palette colored by sunset and every passing cloud. We had no money, but we doubled work hours and found new things we could do without, and so at last we built our little house, and planted trees, and felt we'd found a place to live—and die. There, in tranquillity, I wrote "The Little Gray Lady" and "Such a Little Queen," while birds sang and our trees whispered.

And then, quite of a sudden, the place was discovered. We acquired a "realtor," and Presidents and Justices of the Peace, and had fireworks and athletic meets on the Fourth of July. The hills aforesaid resounded to phonographs and the horned radio. Who wants to waste evenings watching the moon stretch itself upon the waters, or reading and listening to the katydid? So sociable souls sponsored a club-house, a hundred yards away, where all day young women are taught the tango, and young men to grow up qualified for distinguished careers in a jazz band, and at night,

until the wee hours, the two combine their learning to the strains of "Barney Google" and "Yes, We Have No Bananas." Once, to vary the monotony, they ragged "Nearer, My God, to Thee." And then their elders issued a circular telling how they had improved the village. I suppose they have—but, we've lost our paradise. Next spring one of the little trees, grown tall, will bear a sign, "For Sale," and the wife and I are off again—in search of our lighthouse!

Perhaps the truth is that I'm getting old. (At a dinner in my honor the other night, Wilton Lackaye said my hair was "prematurely black," and I note an increasing newspaper tendency to allude to me as "the veteran.") So many grow old young these days; and weary of being harassed. But for this, I might enjoy some of the things that irk me now. In smaller numbers, I think I should like the school friends—even those I didn't like at school—and be interested in the beginnings of people who aspire to be what I am not. As it is, I find myself still struggling for success—so that I can afford the luxury of failure. Failure, and resultant peace.

I am one of the thousands of whom might be said what Lee said of the South—"All we want is to be let alone." A few good friends, and a garden; the stars and the sea; a pipe, a few good books, a little music—not radio'd—and "time to sun myself and grow." I don't care how hard the work, if I can do it in my slippers—and needn't shave; and if there's time to do it carefully and thoughtfully, tranquilly and at leisure, without hurry, distraction and interruption.

Casual reader, can I make you understand? In the midday of a life not without its satisfactions and its honors, the moment I recall as happiest is this:

One night, when we were closing our cottage in late autumn and the servants and neighbors all had returned to town; when a day's writing was done—well done—I drove to the post-office, and found no mail. Then, in the garage and my heavy corduroys, I drained the car—against freezing—and walked through the dark and trees toward the house. A warm light fell upon the lawn—from above a table with an open book. Through a kitchen window came the perfume of corn-bread. And, as I crossed the path, the back door opened and my aproned wife, her cheeks flushed from the fire, said:

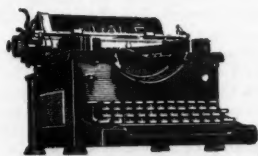
"Come in. Dinner's ready. Afterward we can have a long evening—and read!"

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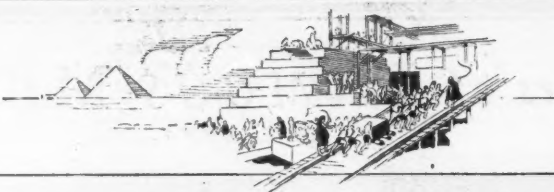


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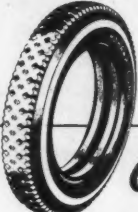
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Serpent of Lies

(Continued from page 65)

over here and let's have a look at you. Never mind your trunk . . . Feng Lee o. k., boys."

Of his own accord Feng opened the chest, produced a jar of preserved ginger and approached Cluett. He blinked on the world through heavy spectacles which made him all eyes, all wide, simple eyes, queerly foreign in a crinkling yellow face, with sparse white hairs of Oriental wisdom dropping goatee fashion from his chin. He set the jar beside Cluett.

"Opium," Feng chuckled. "You keep it."

"Thanks, Feng. I'll take it home to the kids. Hang on a minute . . . Sun Kee!" he bawled; and while Sun was being investigated, "Well, Feng, what's the good news?"

"Next trip—last trip."

"Not so good. You make a million and then forget your friends."

"No money—just old." Feng shook his head. His voice faltered. He strummed long fingers on the ginger jar. "Next time I bring you something better, so you remember me. Then I say good-by. But . . . but we meet some other place. You sarbee?"

"I sarbee, old boy. All same Heaven."

"Gawd forbid," Earnshaw growled.

Feng shuffled away, shouldered his chest which no customs man opened and stood in the second line.

"There goes a white man," Cluett muttered, and doubted the tribute when he regarded Earnshaw. "I knew him for thirteen years running into Honolulu and five here. It's twelve since I searched his dunnage. Break his heart if I did it now."

"Ain't you scared that sometime—may-be—"

"With Feng? Sooner look for stuff in the King's cocked hat. Funny, isn't it, the only honest man I know is a Chink?"

Earnshaw palmed his mouth again. "Don't say much for the rest of us."

"You're right . . . Call your Number One Boy." Before this fog's le potentate Bill Cluett swelled full-girthed and rubicund; very soggy around the collar-band. Impressing stringent regulations, dire penalties, he propelled Number One to the pile of contraband. "Look, son! And listen! You tell those guys—and tell 'em plenty hard—that anyone who comes ashore with this stuff next trip gets six months' jail. No arguments. Up he goes. Six months, sarbee! I've been easy with you too long. Get busy now; let's hear you."

Ten days afterwards the Lyee-sha girded up her odors and waddled north to Hongkong, halting frequently to discharge and reload. On sorry places Feng looked gladly; he would have to see them but twice more, perhaps once; then spend declining years at Father Tachu's feet. Sometimes at night when the galley was black, he stripped the money-belt from his waist to count and recount twenty golden sovereigns; wofully little; and even though it cost half this slender fortune, he planned for Cluett an outstanding gift.

"Before all gold regard a friend; and to your friend make gifts as to your gods." So Tachu preached. So Feng followed. In Hongkong he treaded native mazes to foreign quarters where his twenty pounds shuddered from fabulous demands of men who sold jeweled trophies—if they did not chase him from their shops. A dragon of carved ivory with smoldering eyes of ruby; a jade joss, beautifully hideous, who bathed gross legs in a tureen of baby water-lilies; a tray of polished turtle-shell, cunningly emblazoned after the fashion of Eastern heraldry. Savage prices. Thirty pounds sterling. Four hundred dollars Mex. Three hundred dollars gold.

Feng roamed despondently. Cobbled streets wearied his old feet; throngs jostled him; he lost courage under stares of supercilious whites, until many despairs became desperation, and, suddenly preempting divine beneficence, he betook himself to a fan-tan den. The gods slumbered. Six of his twenty pounds were gone



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when he emerged. Another sovereign he changed to silver and copper, then hobbled among holy mendicants, among the blind, the crippled, the diseased; he lavished coins until every alley echoed ruff-raff blessings, which surely must awaken sleepy deities to the donor's worthiness. Righteously armored, he played again.

Night at Maginty's place welded nations and near-nations; for gaslight chromed all colors save black. Tobacco smoke dropped from low ceilings, whelming tall Maginty's head like mist about a mountain top as he dawdled between tables. Maginty watched winners—just now, a wizened Chink, partly visible beneath slouched felt hat and spectacles. Feng Lee formed a crater on the worn baize, opening ever so slightly to admit more dollars, more florins, malodorous bills, half-crowns, francs, shillings and guilders—garbage of many mints dumped by smiling gods and a less amiable banker into the refuse pit of Feng's arms. The pile shaped progressively: an ivory dragon; a jade joss; a turtle-shell tray when he calculated ninety pounds and transferred all to his pockets. Right, left and across to the banker, he bowed. "Finish."

"Zat so?" said the banker, squinting to Maginty who had drifted behind. "Maybe you play some more. I kinda like you."

Feng was flattered but—"Some other time. I finish now."

Said tall Maginty, a smoky oracle—or obstacle, now that Feng beheld two long arms thrust carelessly but deterrently into the denkeeper's waistband; and high above, in cloudy spheres, a head cocked to one side with equal nonchalance, equal menace—said tall Maginty, "S dangerous to leave here with a lot of money. Lars' week a Chink was killed."

Feng pulled his jacket lower to hide bulging trouser-pockets. "Nobody sarbee."

"No; nobody'll savvy," Maginty agreed. "But maybe you play some more. Lars' week a Chink—was killed." Very complacent, Maginty; suddenly concerned for the hospitality of his house. "Don't you like me place, John? Why didn't you say so? I'll fix that." He grinned at the banker. "Fred, this gen'man says you ain't treatin' him right, ain't showin' him proper respect."

"No. No. I finish. Tha's all."

But Maginty had other ideas. With all ceremony due a winner—almost an obsequy, in fact—he linked his arm through Feng's, swam through waves of grinning heads to a secluded corner table. Firmly, as for Feng's own good, Maginty pressed him onto a stool, seated himself opposite and rifled a deck of cards.

"Maybe you play some more, John," he repeated confidentially. "S dangerous to leave here with a lot of money. Lars' week—a Chink—was killed."

Footsteps, hobbling, dying, dragging on again, broke the furtive hush of Hongkong's early morning. Down thin streets they echoed until the sea, dotted with riding lights bright against dimming stars, opened wide, and water slopped noisily at wharf-piles to drown such feeble sounds as Feng Lee's shuffle and Feng Lee's laments. He sank near a shed to remove his shoes. His three last sovereigns were hidden between his toes, the only cache Maginty had overlooked.

At Singapore, amid ship-shadow stretching mile upon mile along the Tanjong Pagar, there waited, when the Lyee-sha arrived, a sharp-featured, sharp-fingered Portuguese in whose pocked cheeks puce showed like powdered blue-metal fired from a shot-gun at close range. Waylaid Feng, he steered to a whispering place, dark, yet sufficiently revealed to the moon that none of his gold-capped teeth, none of the brummish stones in his cravat-pin, links and finger-rings, no symbol of wealth could be lost upon this coolie fool.

"I know Feng Lee; whole world know he eez hones' man," he praised, affectionately patting Feng, who twisted his goatee to an interrogatory curl and blinked over spectacles

pulled far down his nose. "In Seedney, Meesta Cluett he en'erstand, too. Sam Wah, Lo Ping, Tin Sin, dey come off ship and Cluett bawl, 'Wat dose fellahs got?' Feng Lee, he come off and Cluett laugh: 'Don' search him, goot bloke, not'ings in hees tronk.'" Pausing, he flourished a cigaret case. Presently two orange points glowed. "Sometime I wonder," he reflected, "sometime I wonder w'at you carry in your tronk. Leette presents for friends, maybe; ginger w'at Cluett take 'ome for heez keeds? It goes dot way. All time you give—never get. Dot eez hones' man."

"All time walk—never run," Feng responded and knew enough to walk away.

"S'pose dees time hones' man get," suggested the Portuguese, stepping beside him. "Maybe one hundred pound, fi' hundred dollar gold—for not'ings." The cook grunted suspiciously. "For not'ings at all excep' jus' a leette air like ees all around us. For jus' the leette air w'at ees in your tronk, I give one hundred pound."

Feng shuffled on; the Portuguese clung. Quitting the wharf, they joined polyglot mariners who, in such condition as nationality dictated, walked erectly, walked and chorused, scarcely walked, to find their holes in this belt of cruisers, liners, surcungling the bay.

"S'pose you go 'ome to Fuchau, you don' work no more; you rich like a towkay. One hundred pound buy you every'ing. But me—it buy me not'ings. I don' care. I got plenty." They had reached the Lyee-sha's dock where the Portuguese filled the gate and still cajoled. "For jus' the emptiness w'at is in your tronk."

"So you put opium in?"

"I hones' man, too," the other protested. "You ask everybody. Meesta Earnshaw come now. You watch."

Lurching from a rickshaw, the supercargo offered the runner a coin with his right hand. One instant later his left smote the spot where a dark scared countenance had been. A swift duck saved the boy; he snapped the money, sped. When Earnshaw regained equilibrium, his thick drums distinguished no rattle of retreating wheels; and, as he diagnosed the miracle, he had knocked the coolie completely off the earth. Wherein natural instinct and drunken principle were satisfied; for life hemmed Earnshaw with inscrutable faces, so many gargoyle, so many baffling heads that laughed at him behind slit eyes; and rum inspired solution of these mysteries by smashing them in style of waterways.

Somewhere an artisan contrived a blade for Meesta Earnshaw; the gift would be forced upon him, quietly, without ostentation, so several gentlemen had promised; but Earnshaw's memory was no longer than seven fingers measured against an imperial quart. Thereafter he would drag a dirty palm across his lips, and storm lights flashed over the headland of his nose.

Heeling about, Earnshaw marked the cook. Here official privilege sanctioned war. Approaching in a wide semicircle, he swayed before Feng, who, too old to run, bowed his head, shut his eyes. Earnshaw gauged the distance, his arm a scimitar curving back to deliver the *coup-de-grâce*.

"Penny a shot at Aunt Sally. Shillin' every time you knock a doll over," he grinned. Feng waited.

"Meesta Earnshaw!" The Portuguese locked the supercargo's wrist. He jerked, and Earnshaw teetered about, an unsteady assortment of limbs, torso and angry head.

"S matter? Say, who the deuce are you?"

"Look closer, Meesta Earnshaw. You know me, no?"

Earnshaw, peering, inclined generously towards what little he saw. "Course! Course I do. Ol' Portygee. One o' the best. One o' the whitest . . . Say, where's the flamin' gate? . . . Orright."

Up the gangplank, along the deck he blundered. A cabin door slammed. Feng followed then, to the galley where his bunk was "donkey breakfast" humped between

chest and dunnage. Close to his fathers he had come; now hollowly lay on the mattress while the Portuguese, who could command white devils, persisted darkly at the door.

"You don' know what goes in the tronk. Nobody looks. Maybe I put in ginger for Cluett's keeds . . . I come some more."

He did, daily and nightly, each visit a pursuit, until Feng Lee expected his own shadow to flash gold teeth and brummagems and talk seascapes, immediate and monotonous, into ornate tapestries wherein a coolie lounged mandarin-like amid brothers abased.

Feng likewise wove. In this woof Bill Cluett assumed characteristics of a benevolent god; Bill Cluett grinned exceedingly yet sorrowfully that they should part; Bill Cluett possessed ivory dragon, jade joss, or turtle-shell tray by which to remember Feng Lee until these two met—some other place, all same Heaven. The design enticed. He perceived, too, truth's candle bravely aglow, while no more than one fang of the lying serpent appeared.

Feng pondered. He could lock the trunk and, ignorant of its contents, be honest to a point. Moreover—many moreovers. Often the chest stood open within vision as he pottered over rice and stews. He lost himself in its voids. No splendid gift for Cluett, no lesser presents for old countrymen. For himself, after the three sovereigns were gone, a roost among beggars of Fuchau. Again one hundred sovereigns gleamed so potentially that stews bubbled unnoticed, and Rud Earnshaw, tracing burned smells, stormed the galley. He seized Feng's nape, doubled him almost into the cauldron.

"Cut out the prayers an' get busy. This ain't no missionary ship."

The Portuguese arrived finally one night before the Lyee-sha sailed. Feng Lee plodded down the gangplank. He shouldered his trunk, empty yet sinfully heavy. Two rickshaws waited; one for him, one for the Portuguese, who now could command cook as well as supercargo.

"I go first. You follow me all way. Hones' man, rich man—goot bloke, Feng Lee . . ."

A dejected gang brought the Lyee-sha into Sydney harbor. Innocence depressed them. Impeccable dunnage made this voyage unprofitable; for Number One Boy, having doubts for his own safety if search revealed contraband, had preached, expanded and instilled fear of Australian jails. Lining the rail, they scowled down on Bill Cluett's amplitude. Particular significance attached to the extra staff, the Black Maria stationed behind with eager open door, and to the Customs Supervisor, strutting importantly.

"Grand-stand stuff, bringin' the high muck-a-mucks out," scoffed Earnshaw.

"Six months, six months," Number One waited by.

Heavy of heart, Feng Lee shut his trunk, left it in the galley and wandered around the deck-house to watch Cluett, his friend. The sun dried wet blots behind his spectacles. His head sank until scorched woodwork touched his face. Earnshaw passed, and minutes later returned. He had no reverence, only suspicion, for yellow meditation. His knee struck Feng's shanks.

"I want to see you after you go ashore. Wait for me, sarbee?"

Painfully Feng no-sarbee.

"You wait; that's all."

A whistle blew. "Six months, six months," warned Number One and paraded guiltless ruffians to the wharf. They dumped chests and bundles, formed a line, were prodded and overhauled, combed and fine-combed. Grinning, they passed one by one to the second rank, Sam Wah, Lo Ping, Tin Sin, all ragged and righteous and having Oriental delight in discomposing white authority. Supervisor, extra searchers, Black Maria were big guns trained on a vanished enemy.

Cluett chuckled. He was showing the High Office its superfluity—especially this Supervisor,

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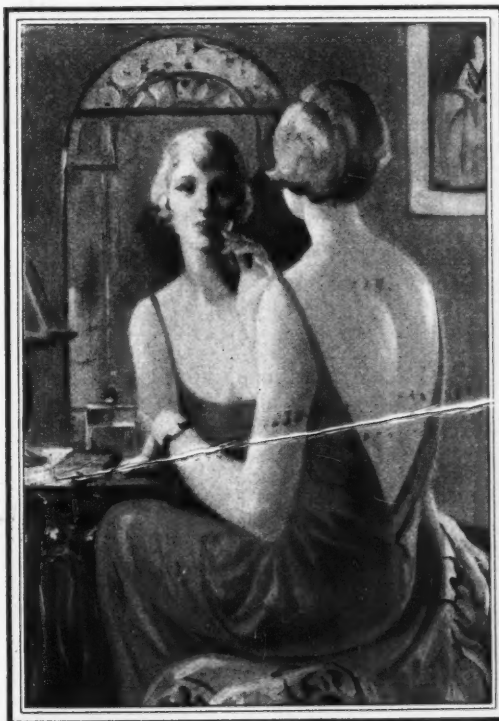
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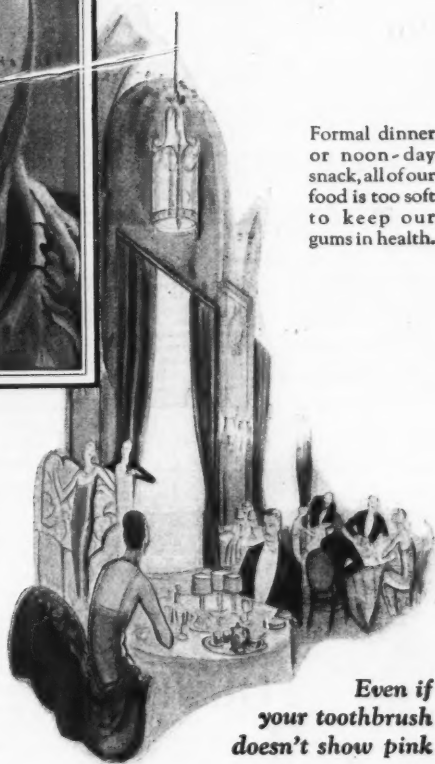
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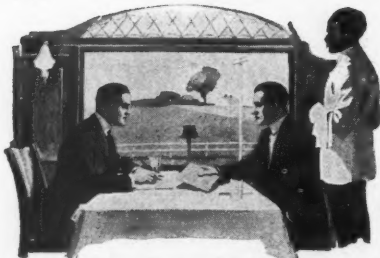


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who, having come to demonstrate, frowned on the dwindling list, the vacant prison van, that virtuous second line, growing longer, jabbering louder every minute. He expected things to happen when he was around. They simply didn't. And conscious of fiasco, he made trifles rites and bleated for useless information.

"Watch this old fellow now," said Cluett. "I think I've told you about him: eighteen years on China boats here and Honolulu and four-square every trip. This is his last . . . Feng Lee! Come over here, Feng." To an auxiliary searcher, who saw all Chinks as Chinks: "Leave his stuff alone, Thompson. Feng Lee o. k., boy!" Twelve years old, that call.

"You don't search him?" the Supervisor inquired.

"Not on your life. I'd stake him against Captain Sir Billygoat Hill of any P. and O."

Cold was the Supervisor. "Thank you, Cluett. You forget I was a P. and O. master myself."

Blunt was Bill. "I don't." Feng Lee had dragged his trunk before them. He raised the lid and as if the poor gift shamed, produced not dragon, not joss, nor turtle-shell tray, but a scarlet table piece of silk, befigured and tasseled in yellow cord, garish of Singapore. Two sovereigns bought it. He held out his gift unsteadily. It was offered and accepted in silence. They blinked together, Cluett and Feng.

Of caste above mongrel friendships, the Supervisor regarded the chest. A paper sheet hid other contents.

"What else is in this?" he interrupted. Cluett turned; his lips turned. "Opium, morphine, dope. Full of it. That's why I never look."

"Li'l presents," said Feng, "just ginger, li-chee, kumquats."

"H-m-m." The Supervisor's cane speared the paper, whipped this off and bored through a second layer. Again: "H-m-m. Do you notice—Cluett?"

As a gentleman he could not gloat; but to be treasured to his glory, this moment; to be reported with drastic recommendations, the insolence and default of the presuming Yank; to be hustled into the Black Maria, this speechless, crumpling Chinese who saw fury sweep amazement from his friend's face. The trunk revealed tiers of rectangular cans, small, flat, of instant recognition and ill repute. He took command.

Feng looked at Cluett; Cluett looked and reached; and Feng was willing to be destroyed—would have been, had not the Supervisor stepped between. He claimed his bone. Coolies fell quiet, then chattered anew as officers hurried the old man past; they called encouragement; but Feng's world lay comatose.

"Six months, six months," grieved Number One, then calculated how much opium an honest man could smuggle in twelve years, four trips a year, fifty cans a trip. All same ten t'ousan' seemed near enough.

Whatever had chilled within Bill Cluett frosted his temples and cheeks. He dabbed vaguely before discovering that the cloth he used was scarlet silk, befigured and tasseled in yellow cord, sharp with odors of Singapore. From end to end he ripped it and stamped the remnants underfoot.

"I told you so," Rud Earnshaw cheered over the rail. "I warned you!"

From subsequent chuckling along the waterfront, it seemed that every tally clerk, stevedore and truckman had done likewise; while among Bill's other sufferings were an official reprimand and unofficial suspicion concerning the partnership of a certain fat customs man and an opium-runner whose activities were now transferred from ship's galley to prison kitchen. Cluett reconstructed his scheme of things; yet when at the sloppy bar of the Dumdragon Castle, he stupefied himself and babbled confusion to all Chinese, particularly ancient ones who brought gifts, the performance was never satisfactory;

for subconscious imps danced loose and called him fool for reasons quite their own.

Beyond all, he desired ten minutes of Feng Lee's eventual freedom. He received an entire evening two months after Feng had been released.

Lounging by the police-wharf piles, Cluett gazed across the harbor at four ships berthed stem to stern. His eye traveled from tan superstructures of a giant P. and O. to the white beauty of a Royal Mail; admired a Nippon Yusen Kaisha's clean lineaments; fell disgustedly on that pest-ship Lyee-sha. She had lain there a week. Now sunset fanned her rust to flame; waters around stole red reflections and were red too, where day's last light burst between shadows lengthening from the shore. He pictured a ferry in Hell.

Feng touched his arm; a forlorn little creature who shuffled back when he turned, who stood there bent and pathetic, rubbing his knuckles.

"I sorry, Missa Cluett."

Although Bill had promised himself much spoil from this encounter, he did no more than rub his toe in the dust.

"Eight months I sorry," Feng muttered.

"Same here."

There seemed nothing else to say. Bill lumbered around and watched the harbor again. Quick dusk descended. Still the old man waited, unmoving. He became part of darkening sheds and crates and loading baskets, yet there when Cluett walked slowly away, Feng crept a few paces behind.

"Not friends?" he pleaded.

"You ratted on me, Feng. What did you do it for?"

Dolefully Feng rolled his head from side to side. "You be where tonight, maybe ten, maybe 'leven?" he asked.

"Up here at the Dumdragon Castle. You'd better not come, though. I may be drunk."

"I sarbee. But I come."

Feng came. With a tallow candle in one hand, a small canvas bag in the other, he arrived and found Cluett sober, willing to follow, and mildly wondering at bag and candle. For these Feng had toiled in the kitchen of an Italian steakadoyst, for these and a skeleton key. Laconically, "Li'l presents."

Rud Earnshaw segregated himself from civilization by deviating fifty yards beyond the crowded thoroughfare at Circular Quay, entering a gate and standing distrustfully on a dark wharf; here he was suddenly many thousand miles away, a solitary white among shadows which might at any moment present him with a knife. Just as deftly, just as bafflingly as in ancient ports, could it happen here—here with the Lyee-sha cuddled against modernity, her prow almost driven into tram-tracks, her mastheads bright, dark, bright, dark from the flash of high electric signs. Brilliant ferry flotillas churned in, disgorge, embarked returning theater crowds and danced across the harbor, scores of them hooting and scurrying. On one a band played jazz.

The city's charivari rolled out; auto-horns and car bells drowned eerie creak of mooring ropes and fret of tides. The immediate world was new, busy, humdrum. Yet on this strip of dock, in corners and burrows of this tramp, hung slant-eyed cacademons very content with antiquity. Contrasts sharpened the dread that Earnshaw carried aboard; yet night after night he returned here to sleep because one week's hotel bill ashore wiped out a month's pay, and he saved his money to spend in treaty ports where luxury cost less, was less restrained. So from midnight to morning he ruled decks from which other officers fled gratefully. He always locked his cabin door. Each sunrise relieved him.

The dock watchman drowsed. Earnshaw jerked him awake; he wanted company aboard this sepulcher; but when he had passed, the man saw no need for further vigilance and found an easier bed in the wharf shed. Earnshaw padded forward, investigated the foc's'le. A single light depicted two duty-men



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asleep. He did not disturb them—let sleeping colliers lie. He went aft whistling no tune at all. Perhaps the third engineer had come back; but the cabin was empty.

A turn to starboard brought an entire city within reach. He could have tossed a biscuit onto that waiting ferry, yet his yell would have been heard as no more than foc's'le shenanigan, if heard at all. Cursing isolation, he swung about. A shadow moved and vanished.

"Who's that?" No one answered. "Nerves," Earnshaw concluded. "Hang Sydney. Rotten place. 'Ud be just like a Chink to—" On their own ground he understood them; afield they gleaned white cunning, learned new tricks.

Earnshaw unlocked his cabin, entered, pressed the wall switch. It clicked, but the electric bulb was dead, the cubby-hole black. He fumbled in his pocket for matches. Something brushed past with slight, startling contact, from which he leaped. The door closed and was locked outside with the keys he had left dangling there. He shot to the porthole. Its circle framed a face; and before so slight an adversary as Feng Lee, Earnshaw's panic subsided. He was possessed of brittle laughter.

"Makin' more trouble for yourself?" he demanded.

"S'pose you light match; you sarbee then."

Earnshaw produced a box, almost empty.

"What's the little game, anyhow?"

"S'pose you light match."

A small flame burst in Earnshaw's fingers and illumed walls, strangely bare; a bunk from which all bedding had been stripped, a narrow cabin swept clean of table, mats, trunks, clothes, junk treasured as souvenirs. Nothing movable remained. The match flickered out.

"Maybe I put them with ginger, lichees, kumquats. But I bring you li'l present, too. You watch." Feng slowly raised to the porthole a lighted candle and held it a few inches forward so that grease dripped into the cabin. Walls, ceiling, floor rushed from pitch to other. "This is can'le of truth. But you see that fellow over there, see?"

Waving the bougie, he discovered to Earnshaw a brown rope coiled in the corner. The supercargo smiled. The rope presented a possibility. One sure fling and he could imprison Feng's arm. He swooped; his head touched the rope. The coil unwound like a mainspring, and Earnshaw hurled back from an angry thing that flashed once but, missing, reared high and was malignant from blue tongue-tip to last brown loop of its tail. He crashed against his bunk, sprang on the boards and stood head bent beneath the ceiling and as far into the wall as he could crush himself. He dragged his palm across his lips. The palm was wet, the mouth dry.

"Feng!" he shouted. "What the—" "That fellow is serpent of lies," explained Feng, and snuffed the candle of truth.

Earnshaw and a huge brown snake occupied this pitch-black coop. For a moment the man was silent. Then his legs, arms, body, even his neck felt stabs.

"Light the candle! Lemme see! What are you doin' this for?"

"You got matches, Missa Earnshaw," Feng suggested.

Yes, he had matches. His box still held three after this one was struck. It sputtered feebly. The snake had crawled closer and, stretched full length, four venomous feet long, threatened him through black beads. Before this match died, he lighted another. Two were left, then one.

"I'm on me last. Light the candle, quick!"

Seconds were years before Feng's wick burned again. While he could see the snake, Earnshaw imagined some security. Momentarily his glance beat from the sly body to the window's picture: a candle, a mask penumbral but for eyes which were pits of fire as Feng's glasses reflected bougie light. This, swore Earnshaw, was a heathen torture chamber; this an implacable joss; Sydney and civilization a world distant. Yet autos honked, car

bells rattled; squirts of sound fled across harbor waters to join street cacophony and echo about lofty buildings with electric advertisements. The jazz-band ferry passed again; its saxophones moaned.

Just as deftly, just as bafflingly as in ancient ports, had it happened here. Earnshaw was cold. If only he had some weapon; but Feng had left nothing.

"Chinky, I'll kill you when I get out of this!" "Soon you say something else," Feng smiled and blew the candle out once more. By its last beam Earnshaw perceived the snake writhe forward.

"Light it—light it!" he yelled.

But all remained black; and Feng listened to harsh, short breathing, then strangled sounds of profanity employed as prayer. "Gor! blimey! Gor!—blimey!"

"Which you like—can'le of truth or serpent of lies?"

"Gimme a light!"

In his own good time, Feng obliged. A minute's torment, and Earnshaw was a limp rag plastered to the wall by its own wetness. Automatically he wiped his palm across his lips; light glistened on a trickle creeping down his chin. The snake investigated dark corners, but warily flickered its head back and forth.

"Now s'pose you tell me something," Feng requested.

Earnshaw offered uncomprehending eyes.

"Bout Portygee in Singapore, sarbee."

The other's mouth moved. "What about him?"

"You—sarbee."

There was an instant in which Earnshaw returned to life, the snake forgotten. "Sarbee nothing. You're crazy! By cripes, when I—" But just an instant.

Taking a deep breath, Feng exhaled steadily until the candle flame bent before the draught, feathered, and there remained only the wick's black nimbus. The cabin dimmed, grew all black save for one uncertain scintilla.

Bill Cluett, who stood close to Feng Lee, hard by the port-hole, and was auditor rather than spectator, heard Rud Earnshaw speak rapidly—loud, all same big prayer, at Feng's command—phenetically. He heard, with deep understanding.

"An' I took the stuff from the Portygee when you backed down the last minute in Singapore. I needed the hundred quid. Yes, that's the truth. Stop blowin' that candle. Feng, for Gorsake! I'm telling, I'm telling! . . . After we made port an' you packed your chest an' left it in the galley, I sneaked in an' cleared out all your—look at it! look at it comin'!—cleared out all your ginger an' junk, except the cloth for Cluett. He hadn't searched you for twelve years. Not likely he would this time. So I put the opium in, an' if it hadn't a been for that Supervisor—It's the truth, Gorsake. Strike me dead! Feng! Feng! Keep it away. Gimme the candle, get me a club, anything just so's I can hit! . . . Blimey . . . Blimey . . . Comin' at me . . . Comin' at me . . ."

A short crowbar followed the candle through the window; keys were tossed in, too; they clattered alarmingly.

"That fellow die pretty soon anyhow," Feng advised. "Got no fangs."

Dull blows, as of a serpent being mashed, pursued William Cluett and Feng Lee along the deck, to the wharf and harbor's edge. And in broad thoroughfares of Circular Quay, where castes of the earth assemble but do not associate, dead-beats and dignitaries paused to watch a fat white man who walked with arm pressed tightly about the shoulders of a wizened, blinking Chinese. Proudly he walked.

"Truth is a candle to the everlasting glory of our fathers," one recited in native tongue; "a lie is a serpent fouling their sacred dust."

And the other, who didn't sarbee and yet felt called upon, contributed, "It's a gift, Feng; it's a gift."

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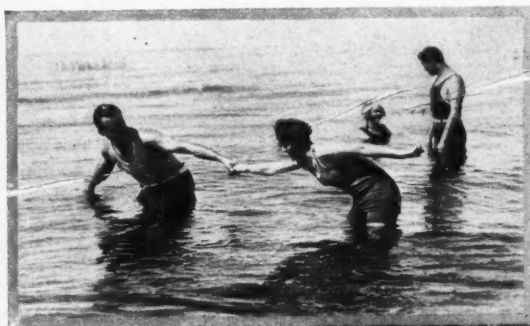
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I Paid the Price of Poverty by Thomas Burke (Continued from page 111)

determined to go my own way without one cent's worth of help from him or his class.

A year or so later I began to write, and had essays and occasional stories accepted by papers of good class; and, as I have said, at twenty-three, by becoming known to an editor, I met people outside my own class. This editor said that I must shed my shyness and mix more with people, and he took me round with him. And again I was reminded that I was not as others were.

They were pleasant to me, but it was a deliberate pleasantness, very different from their casual attitude to each other. They knew that I was wearing shabby, ill-cut clothes because I had no others. They knew that my clumsy manners were the natural manners of my class, and not eccentricities; and, being sensitive, I knew that they knew, and the knowledge made me even more shy.

Once, as I was leaving, I overheard my host speaking of me.

"Shall I bring him along on Sunday? Interesting boy—quite a youngster—got something in him, I think. Of course he isn't a gentleman, but I imagine he's all right."

Another remark was reported to me by a third person in whose presence it had been made by one of the guests. "Your girl's rather interested in him, isn't she? Well, I suppose he's a clever kid and all that, but I shouldn't let it go too far. What? Oh, I dare say he's all right, but one wouldn't like one's daughter to . . . Well, you know, these things do count; and the back street atmosphere sticks, you know."

Yes; it was sticking. I was in some way unclean. I had been born in exile, and I was made to suffer all that every man suffers who, by his own labors or qualities, moves from the reek and stain of the back streets into decent surroundings and decent society. I knew then why Labor men and others who have had this

struggle deny themselves and put money aside that they may send their sons to expensive schools and universities. I had always agreed with those people who laughed at them and called them snobs and bourgeois; but I knew now that snobbery was not the motive. It was that the son might be saved from the shames and struggles of the father; that he might start life fairly with the cachet of the public school accent and the public school manner. Without that, the struggle is fiercely handicapped.

There is another wound which the established class inflicts on the humble. It is this—that if you are poor, you are suspect; you must always bring references with you. I learned that from my well-born host when we were discussing the matter of class.

"You see," he said, "it's not the fault of the poor at all; it's the atmosphere and environment. With a man of the back streets, you never know. You can never feel safe with a man of the mob. You never know when he might go off the rails. You never know when his class won't come out in some mean or dishonest action."

I had no quarrel with his attitude, but the injustice of it burned and rankled in me for a whole year. My people, my back street family, whose ideals of conduct were as high and severe as the ideals of any noble family, to be classed with cowards and knaves by this man of good birth! Can you wonder that there is class-feeling in England today?

It is all very ridiculous now, and I laugh at it. But to the sensitiveness of youth, it wasn't laughable, and poor young men of today are, I know, suffering just what I suffered years ago. My latest book, "The Wind and the Rain," in which I have told the full story of my early years, has brought me many letters from young English and American readers who are suffering much as I suffered.

What message can I give them? None, I

fear. There is no relief for that suffering. So long as boys born among the poor dare to have brains and fine feelings and a desire to escape from mean streets, so long they shall be made to pay the price of their daring; and this tribute will have to be paid until the English public school and university education is available to all, rich and poor.

The only consolation I can offer is a prophecy that in later years they will be able to smile at the creatures who were arrogant to them as I smile now. I still sometimes meet these County Family people, but only in the street. Since the publication of my latest book I have had invitations from them and from friends of theirs, and these invitations have gone into the fire or the waste-paper basket. I don't want them. I prefer to be received for what I am and to be asked right in without reservations as to my position or achievements. I have found my place among cheery people who don't put up barriers; among musicians, painters and writers—the only true democrats.

I shall never forget the back streets, the insults, the shames that were fastened on my birth, and the misery of dirty collars and wet boots, but I am no longer worried by them. The scars are there, but they are hidden, and I have now an armor of humor and indifference through which no gibes of the kind I once received can penetrate.

Young men of today going through what I went through will achieve this armor in time—but only when they are successful and no longer need it. There is the irony of it, and the hell; but thank God it is a hell which makes one sweet and kind towards all strugglers, and ready with whatever help one can give to the poor youth clambering through the thorns. I have suffered because I was born poor, and if in any way I can help another to avoid one step of that dirty journey, my own memories compel me to reach out my hand.

I Am in Favor of Bushy Whiskers (Continued from page 103)

exclaimed simultaneously, and one of them said:

"They are so much more amusing, companionable. They have polished their wits. The others are dull and stupid."

"You think nothing of physical attraction, then? You would not have liked the bushy-whiskered major of early nineteenth century days with his ardor and desire."

"Certainly not," said my daughter. "I think he must have been repulsive and odious."

"That is just what I thought," I went on. "That is my whole argument. You get yourself up like boys, the young men get themselves up like girls, and you get on splendidly together. They are charming companions. But there won't be any marriages, or not enough. There are too many of you and only a small proportion of these men will marry."

"Girls have to go about together and have luncheon together. It is absurd," said the married lady. "There are so few men about."

"This is really nonsense," broke out the girl by the fire. "Nature sees to these things. There is going to be just as much ordinary love-making and just as many marriages."

"And just as many children?" I ventured.

"Oh, no!" came from different corners, and then the lawyer, putting his finger-tips together, began a dissertation on birth control. But I did not want to be drawn off the scent, so I interrupted him.

"Civilizations have declined before now just because of the dislocation of normal sexual relationships. You spurn the normal physical man; at the same time you display yourselves as never before have women displayed themselves. I don't say you do it consciously—you are caught up in a big post-war wave, in which the values and standards to which we have been accustomed have been swept away. There is no mystery about you. You expose

yourselves outwardly and inwardly at once. There is no need for men to hunt you. You are such an easy prey that they have no desire to hunt. Some of you are in a terror of being left behind, and therefore you fling yourselves at the man. The bushy-whiskered major had to break down many barriers and obstacles before he even reached the crinoline."

"Hang that bushy-whiskered major!" shouted one of the girls, blowing a cloud of smoke from her mouth. "He is dead and done with, out of date and utterly uncivilized. We don't want people to hunt us; we want them to know us. We want to talk openly and freely about everything under the sun, without calculating whether we are luring the men on."

"Don't tell me," I exclaimed, "that girls have entirely given up trying to captivate men. I have never pretended that you had reached that pitch of abnormality. I merely say that the method you adopt is unsuccessful."

"What on earth do you know about it?" said the girl by the fire. "We may have got rid of the old crude methods of mystery and concealment, but it does not follow that we have not got subtler methods."

"Intellectual crinolines," suggested the lawyer.

"To lure moral whiskers," I added. "All modesty has completely vanished," I went on. "Body and mind are laid bare for you from the start, and you are called by your Christian name after the first ten minutes, and 'darling' a quarter of an hour later. The nambly-pamby men like it; the normal male does not."

"What you describe," the young man said, after some meditation, "may exist here and there among a comparatively small set, but you greatly exaggerate its extent and its significance."

"I am not so sure," I answered. "Fashion once set is copied to a greater extent than you can notice at the time. The phenomenon I describe exists not only here but in other countries. Moreover, I do not think I exaggerate, because I have not said anything which any of you deny. There are many more girls than young men and that is responsible for a good deal of what happens. Many of the girls cannot marry and many of the young men do not want to marry."

"Give them a chance," he interrupted. "Wait till they are older and have settled down. They have got specially difficult circumstances to contend with. Do not judge them all by the boys of twenty."

"Yes," I said, "that is fair enough, but what is the future for the girls who do not marry? They refuse to look into their future. They seem to regard old age with horror."

"They have got plenty of resources in themselves," said the married woman; "more than their predecessors."

I very much doubt if this is true. But I did not continue the argument as conversation became general and some were already beginning to go. Before we broke up I said:

"Well, I am a very different sort of parent from my predecessors. Just imagine my father having a discussion with my generation on sex and virility. You none of you know how unthinkable that is."

They laughed and said good-bye. As the last guest left I began to imagine an argument with the same company ten years hence when they all had busts and chignons; and then I remembered I had an engagement with a Chinese professor at the House of Commons. Perhaps I might ask him if the virility of the Chinese had waned since they lost their pigtails.

The Heart of Juanita by Kathleen Norris (Continued from page 101)

man is something entirely incalculable," Kent presently added thoughtfully.

"It isn't that woman you liked—the woman your family objected to so many years ago?" she hazarded.

"Hattie? Oh, no! I've not seen her since that time," he went on, as if glad to have the conversation switched into grooves so much less difficult. "I broke away from home just after that, with a sort of spring fever. I wanted to plunge into newspaper life, theatrical life, studios late at night, adventure of all sorts—the things that look so fascinating to young fellows from the outside: bohemia—liberty—self-expression. You know the phraseology. Hundreds of kids fling themselves into it every year, perhaps to find," he ended in a lighter tone, "as I did, that mother was right."

"The most surprising feature about my own experience was to discover that my mother was right about—well, everything," Kent presently added. "My mother was—is old-fashioned, you know. She always kept the same servants, went to see their mothers in the hospital—that sort of thing. She took us to the same place up in Maine for twenty years, and bought us tennis rackets and brown khaki clothes and cameras and sunburn medicine, and she told us that 'little gentlemen,' 'little ladies,' 'nice people' did this and that. We were, of course, the only family alive," he ended, with the hint of a smile.

"Do you mean she was a snob?" Juanita asked hesitatingly.

"My mother? My Lord, no! Mother's American, the finest sort. Plain clothes, plain food, interested in everybody and everything—it's her sort of snobbishness not to be snobbish in anything, in any way," Kent elucidated.

"I've been thinking that your people were different—humbler," Juanita admitted.

The man made no comment.

"I see now that there is a lot in all that," he resumed, after a pause filled with morning sweetness and bird songs. He had turned the car left outside of Santa Cruz, and they were running down the flat cliff road, with the ocean, sparkling and blue, on their right.

"I didn't know your family had servants and went away for the summer and all that," Juanita, struck, girl-fashion, with this aspect, mused. And then with sudden animation she added: "Oh, we could have made the rancho today—we could have made the rancho if we had only thought, if we had started earlier! Oh, why—why didn't we think of it!"

"Why," Kent said, with his kindest smile, "why, where do you think we are going?"

"Not down as far as Solito!" she said, almost in a scream.

"Of course," he answered.

For a few seconds delight overwhelmed her, and he saw her clasp her hands, writhe in her seat like an ecstatic child and finally bury her face.

"Oh, but I love you for that!" he heard her half whisper. And when she faced him again, although she was smiling, her blue eyes were wet. "Kent," she said, "to see the old house, and talk to Lola—oh, but I can't believe it! Why didn't you tell me?"

"Waiting for this, maybe," he said. And although the tone was only his usual dry, indifferent one, and he did not smile, the happy blood rushed into her face.

It was one of a girl's perfect days, one of those times that seem too rich, too marvelously satisfying to belong to the routine of life. To recognize the landmarks they presently reached, to catch a first glimpse of the weather-stained great walls of the old Mission, to seize with trembling fingers the edges of the seat beneath her and look with swimming eyes at the Amigos running swollen and high, at the willows, the eucalyptus trees—at last at the barns and paddocks and fences, the stooping peppers, the sleepy, sunshiny roof where the old pigeons walked in busy circles, the hacienda set against

a background of dancing, sun-flooded sea, was to feel her heart bursting with pain that was all joy, and joy that brimmed her eyes with tears.

Kent brought her to it all with an odd air of quiet satisfaction, immediately obliterating himself, making of himself merely a sympathetic witness to her welcome and her delight. She was out of the car almost before it was stopped, her voice ringing out over the quiet barnyard. It was noon; there were no shadows, the cows were far away on the hills.

But two or three mongrel dogs came out barking and sniffing, and she was in the center of their leaping and licking ranks, bent over to caress them, laughing, naming them eagerly, when the Mexican women streamed forth—Lola, Lolita, Dolores, the baby, all excitement and wild ejaculated prayers and kisses.

Then she grew quieter; going over every inch of the old dear home, opening the locked doors, looking up at the ceilings, unbolting the heavy shutters to get once again the beloved aspects from windows. The dining-room was dark; unearthly green light filtered in upon the table that was pushed aside, upon the sunken earth floor.

"This was my room," Juanita said in a stilled voice. "This was mother's room. See those marks on the wall there, Kent? Those were made by Indian arrows almost a hundred years ago."

Everywhere there was silence—packed dead leaves damp and odorous without; emptiness, musty smells, darkness within. But sunlight flooded the old balconies and lay bright and clear among the pampas grasses and willows and lilacs of the garden.

"One could make it a home again, Kent. For all their smartness, the modern architects can't build such walls as these. They don't get these proportions, so broad and smooth, so not quite straight, so mellowed. Imagine the rooms cleaned, the rugs down, water in the fountain again, and a hot, hot still August day, all blue shadows and blinding light, in the patio!"

Kent said little. He was glad when they were out among the good barnyard smells again. But under all the discoveries, the recognitions and memories that were like one voice of welcome, there was for Juanita the pervading sense of satisfaction in his presence. Even in his least responsive moments, in his most casually indifferent mood, it was strangely quieting to know him there. She told herself a thousand times that nothing could ever take this day away from her.

It was almost one o'clock when they took the luncheon basket to the rocks where first they had met, sun-bathed rocks today, with the tame sapphire of the sea quietly lapping them.

There was something typically—well, what was it—masculine?—in his fashion of surrendering the basket to her, once it was placed, level and secure, in the shadow of a great boulder. The part of the male to secure the food, of the woman to administer and prepare it, his comfortable lapse into idleness seemed to imply.

Juanita happily assumed the responsibility. She unshaped the hamper, took out the fringed napkins, the cups, poured coffee smoking from the vacuum bottle, and learned that he liked cream and three lumps, exclaimed ravenously over the fried chicken that was still faintly warm and the buttered French bread that was sour and crisp. Salad was fresh in an iced compartment of white enamel; there was a gypsy kettle fitted snugly into an octagonal recess.

"Kent, I never saw such a darling box! Who does it belong to?"

"It belongs to me," he said.

"But how did you happen to have it?" she asked, surprised.

"Because I bought it—no longer ago than Friday."

"But, good gracious—aren't they terribly expensive?"

"This was rather expensive," he admitted. "I was in the city on Friday, buying cigars for Mr. Chatterton, and I saw it and remembered that you and I were to have a picnic today, and got it. It's English, I believe. Did you ever see anything that so perfectly suggested a nursery tea on the moors?"

She mused. "How I would love to see England!"

"Well," he suggested encouragingly, "you probably will. A year or two ago, spending your school vacations down here, you might have said, 'How I should like to see Manila!' And this time next week you will be on your way there."

"As a companion and mother's helper," she reminded him. "That may be a very difficult position. It seems a jump into the dark. It doesn't seem real, somehow. It's a very remote post, you know, and Mrs. Coleman, in a charming letter to me, says that it will be deathly dull."

Kent stretched himself on the warm, slanted surface of the rock, in the blue shadow of a great boulder, and Juanita began to repack the picnic box with almost the same enthusiasm she had felt at its unpacking. Now he opened his eyes to send her the rare, the strangely sweet smile she so loved in him.

"I'll come down and rescue you," he suggested.

"Is there really any hope of it, Kent? I shall feel so horribly lonesome!" she said wistfully.

"Yes, there's a very fair chance of it," he answered in a practical tone, after a moment. And before she spoke again he had reverted to the topic of Sidney Fitzroy. "I want to clear up this Fitzroy matter before I leave Mr. Chatterton," he said.

"Back here at home," Juanita said dreamily, idle now, and leaning against a sloping rock of her own, with her hands locked behind her head and her half closed eyes far away on the sea, "I feel as if nothing would be cleared up again. Six months ago I left school supposing that all the rest of my life would be spent right here. Perhaps I imagined I might marry one of the men in Solito; there are writers there, interesting people sometimes," she added. "But that—that there would be catastrophe—"

He knew that she was merely thinking aloud, and made no comment.

"And after that the Chatterton house, so wonderful, yet so big and unreal in some way, and Billy being so kind, and Anne Russell being so kind—and suddenly her coming home, Mrs. Chatterton, such a glorious person! And since then," she added, "it's all been so mixed and queer. Her voice, that I thought I recognized. Her trying to send me up to town to live at the Saint Monica Club. And then suddenly changing all that—I was to go off, so suddenly, to Manila. And then—what we found out on New Year's Day, about the man you're hunting and the man I'm hunting being the same. Who is he, and who am I, and what does she know about it?"

"It is funny," Kent conceded musingly as she paused. "But it probably has some quite commonplace explanation. Here's a consideration that came to me in the night," he added. "If I run this Fitzroy to earth, it's extremely probable that we'll find that you have some claim on him. And that Mission Street property is worth something."

"Kent, might he be my father?" she asked suddenly.

"It's possible. That may have been what your mother was trying to tell you."

"Shall you ask Mrs. Chatterton outright if she knows anything about him?"

"I may—now," he answered thoughtfully.

"Well," he roused himself, "I wish we were here for six weeks, but we aren't—we have to go home again. Come along!"

They walked, almost in silence, along the

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cliffs, back to the farmyard and the car. The cows were slumping awkwardly home for the milking now; at three o'clock there were long shadows across the earth. Kent strapped the lunch-box in place, and Juanita, rather pale but perfectly steadfast and composed, said good-by to the Mexicans, kissed the old woman and the new baby, and was once again tucked into the front seat for the long run home.

Perhaps she was tired; she did not talk very much, only occasionally volunteering a little information. When the landmarks stopped she fell silent, and Kent was silent too. After a while the sweetness, the softness of her leaned a little against his shoulder, and he glanced down, thinking she might be sleepy. But her beautiful blue eyes were wide awake, fixed solemnly on space.

"What are you thinking about, Juanita?" he asked affectionately.

"Wishing this day needn't end," her voice said, out of the twilight, with a deep sigh.

"You like me, then?" he asked, with a little awkward laugh.

"I like you very much, Kent," she said, her voice thickening suddenly. And for a while they drove in silence.

But when they had reached the house, quite in the dark of a Sunday evening now, and when he had brought the car about the curve to the very spot whence it had started ten hours before, he got out and came around it, and as he freed her from her wrappings and helped her to stand, stiff and shaky and sleepy and laughing, on the dark path, he said suddenly in a low voice:

"Juanita, you don't know how I like you! It isn't fair, perhaps, to say even that—you know how I've been trying not to say it. But it's no use! I want you so—"

He had only got so far before, to them both, the mumbled, confused words became superfluous, and trembling, she put her hand on his shoulder and he his arms about her. Juanita, not knowing what she did, raised her face in the dim gloom, and Kent bent to her for his first kiss. And for a long minute they clung so, the girl's slender body close to his, their hearts beating together, and all the world whirling about Juanita in a storm of ecstasy and fear and joy.

The bigness of him, the strength of him, in the big rough coat! The touch of his hard cheek on hers, the warmth of his breath and the faint out-of-door odor of his hair and face. Juanita felt her senses swimming; she said, "Kent—Kent—"

But she made no attempt at resistance. And after a few seconds she was free, free to vanish in at the side door and run up the dark stairs with her heart singing wildly and every pulse in her body thrilling. She stood in the center of her room, panting, glowing, her eyes stars, her whole body electrified.

Oh, ecstasy—to be loved by the man she loved! To be in love—to have some one in love with you! In his arms—she had been in his arms! And he had stooped, the big arm holding her shoulders so gently, so tightly, to press his face against hers!

But no, she couldn't think of it. It suffocated her. She shut her eyes, swaying, as she stood in the middle of the plain, pretty room, intoxicated with the memory of it. Kent! Kent! He had spoken of another woman—a shadow. A mere dead memory!

Her mirror. She was at it, staring at herself, this transformed girl who was beloved. Her disheveled vision laughed back at her excitedly. Her heart was bursting.

Presently she went into the hall; found a window that commanded the curve of the drive. There, in the black dark, he had stopped the car. Electricity thrilled through her again from head to foot. The car was of course gone now. No matter, that bit of the drive was forever sacred.

Carrie had come up-stairs. Juanita, kneeling, staring out of the dark window, jumped in terror. All footsteps were Kent's tonight. Carrie's room was farther on, in the same wing.

"There's a note for you, Miss Espinosa. And would you like I should bring some supper up to your sittin'-room?" Carrie asked.

A note! Kent's hand. But she had expected this. She could feel her breath plunging again. She said something to Carrie, went back into her own room.

"Juanita," said the note, "I'm playing bridge with both the C's. Tomorrow? Kent."

Ecstasy. Ecstasy. Juanita propped the note on her bureau as she made preparations for a hot bath. She had her supper with it facing her, upright against her tumbler. But she could not eat or read. Everything swam about her in a confused brightness and excitement; she could not get her thoughts in order, but they were all sweet.

Meanwhile she crept softly through doors and passages to the upper hallway, dimly lighted tonight, with an occasional maid crossing it, and to the head of the wide stairway. Light issued in a warm stream from Mr. Chatterton's apartments, but everything out here was mellowed and shadowy.

A slim girl in a dark dress could silently descend the stairway; stop at the half-way station behind the kindly dropping fingers of the palms, and so look down, across the lower hall, into the little study where the bridge game was in progress.

She could see Mrs. Chatterton, lovely tonight in a cobwebby black lace, diamonds flashing about her throat. The hand that handled the cards so smoothly, so expertly, flashed with the blue-white fires too. Kent was her partner.

"Oh, heavens, how you frightened me!" Juanita, recalled suddenly to herself, said with a half gasp and a half laugh, finding Billy Chatterton in the shadows of the landing beside her. Their hands were locked; they were both laughing.

"Hello, hello!" he said in an eager whisper. "Don't give me away. Nobody knows I'm home! Come back up-stairs—where we can go—"

Tiptoeing, still clinging to each other's fingers, they went silently back to the upper landing and through the doorway into the back hall, the upper service hall.

"I didn't know you were coming home!" the girl said, blinking in the brighter light.

"Well, neither did I!" His face was dirty, Juanita discovered; he was cold, red-faced, tired from a long run.

"You've had your supper?" she asked. "I had two chicken sandwiches and a bottle of ginger ale at Pebble Beach at twelve o'clock," he answered. "I'm ravenous. Could you round up Dudgeon or somebody to feed me? I'll wash my hands. But I don't want to interrupt the bridge game until I'm clean."

"Of course." She skimmed down the back stairway like a swallow. Nobody but Rosie, one of the undermaids, could be roused at this hour on Sunday night.

Rosie, however, snorting with excitement, and Juanita, laughing with sheer lightness of heart, and Billy, all elaborate caution and clumsy noiselessness, opened presses and ice-boxes, unearthed supper for a dozen, and spread cold turkey, cake, salad, fruit and a dozen embellishments on one end of the pantry table.

Juanita sat opposite the son of the house when Rosie had disappeared, and Billy, with his mouth full, told her odds and ends of news about the house party.

"Did you have a good time?"

"Oh, fine! Lots of nice people there—we went over to the Enchanted Cottage and played roulette every night—golf all afternoon." He bit largely through a roll. "Slept all morning," he added, "breakfast at twelve, and on the links at one. Then we'd play poker or Mah-Jong until about eleven, and then go over to the Cottage."

"It sounds to me like one long headache," Juanita said, with a little shuddering laugh. "But I thought, and I know your mother thought, that you were not going to be home until Tuesday night?" she added.

The KELLY FLEXIBLE CORD



The Peregrinations of the Pecks

From Los Angeles the travelers have turned northward, and we find them here just about to leave after a visit to one of the famous old Spanish missions. While Jim takes advantage of the opportunity to fill up his radiator, Mrs. Peck listens to a tale of the long ago. The children of course are more interested in making friends with the dog than they are in architecture or legend, though they have been rather impressed by some of the stories about Indians. The family's next stop will be San Francisco, where they plan to spend several days.

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"Well, I wasn't. But the whole party kind of broke up in a row this morning," he explained frankly. "Bert Lilley had too much last night and got kind of noisy, and one of the Hamilton girls rode into Monterey this morning and sent herself a telegram that her mother wanted her at home, and we all decided that too much was enough."

"I've been over just that same ground today," Juanita said. She told him that she and Kent had picnicked in that neighborhood, on the old rancho where she had spent all her life.

Billy knew the country somewhat, was interested, as a motorist, in identifying it.

"Gosh, that was some run!" he commented simply. "Aren't you pretty tired?"

"Well, I was. I will be tomorrow, perhaps. But I had a hot bath." Her thoughts were with Kent again, electrified, ecstatic. Tired! She could fly tonight. "I haven't much time," she went on. "You know I'm going away. I go up to town on Tuesday, and this was my last chance to see the rancho, perhaps in months."

"Where are you going?" he asked sharply, looking up.

"Why, a Mrs. Coleman, a friend of your mother, is sailing for Manila. Her husband is an army officer—"

"Jud Coleman—yes, I know him," he interrupted, with an impatient nod. "What about it?"

"Well, it seems that Mrs. Coleman doesn't like to go down there alone—they're not to be in Manila, but at some rather lonely post quite a distance away—and she has asked me to go with her as a companion," Juanita explained. "They sail—we sail on Thursday."

"What's the idea of that?" Billy asked blankly, after a pause.

"Your mother thought it would be a good opportunity for me."

"An opportunity! Up there on a dead-and-alive post—my Lord, you'll be bored to death! A few second lieutenants—"

"I don't think the idea is for me to stay during their whole time there," Juanita offered, a little discouraged.

"Well, I should hope it wasn't!" Billy muttered disgustedly, attacking the turkey again. "My Lord! Then you'd have gone off without seeing me again?" he asked suddenly, hurt, like a small boy.

"I was going to leave you a note," she said, hoping she would have remembered to do it.

For a few minutes, finishing his meal now, he ate in silence, scowling, obviously discontented.

"I'll be darned if I see any sense in it!" he said, more than once. "Why don't you say you won't go?"

"I want to go," the girl answered. But immediately in her own heart she questioned her own statement. Did she? Only this morning perhaps the prospect was agreeable enough. But tonight her lips were still burning from a man's kiss.

He hadn't wanted to love her, Kent. He had felt himself held by another woman. It was only after the happy day's talk, the picnic on the rocks, the long drive, when her shoulder had been close to his shoulder that he had suddenly discovered her, suddenly put his arms about her, and with a stumbling and incoherence so utterly unlike his usual indifferent, careless manner, had muttered that he loved her.

Manila or India or Alaska—what did it matter, if Kent loved her, if he were coming to get her? She smiled dreamily at Billy; this handsome boy, in the cleanly bright woodwork and porcelain of the pantry, was talking agitatedly, but she did not quite grasp what he was saying.

Billy was blond, rosy, handsomer than Kent. Kent was tall, dark, with a brief, reluctant flash to his smile . . .

"Tell me the low-down now, wouldn't you?" Billy was asking urgently.

What on earth had he been talking about? She smiled at him.

"Wouldn't you have a better time here?"

Billy asked. And to her horror he pushed aside his glass and plate and leaned across the narrow table to lay his hand on her own. "I'm going to tell you something," he said, laughing a little, but in earnest too. "I came home partly on your account. You've—you've got me just where you want me!"

Clumsily phrased and ineloquently delivered, yet it was unmistakable. Juanita leaned back, smiling nervously, the bright light above her head shining into her blue eyes, and giving a transparent glory, like that of a sun-flooded flower, to the exquisite purity of her skin.

"Don't talk like that!" she said.

"Why not?" he asked excitedly, in a low tone.

"Oh, because—your mother would be wild!"

"Don't talk like a second-girl!" Billy reproved her hotly. "You're just as good as my mother!"

For a moment they were silent, looking straight at one another. Then both laughed and Juanita said:

"I didn't mean that!"

"I'm sorry," Billy said meekly.

"Pumpkin pie?" Juanita questioned, indicating it.

"Gosh, no—nothing more!" the boy answered. And when he spoke again it was more mildly. "I suppose I sound like a kid to you?"

"You are a kid to me!" she answered, with an affectionate smile.

"I'm nearly twenty-two; I graduate this June and get a job on my father's paper," Billy stated.

"And I'm nearly twenty-four!"

He arranged and disarranged his knives and forks fretfully. "Gee, I wish you weren't going away!"

"I'll be back," she reminded him, her heart so full of happiness tonight that she could afford him a little indifferent kindness.

"Won't you—say something?" Billy asked in a low voice, after a moment. "You know what I mean. Just to let me know that—that there's nobody ahead of me?"

"I can't—let you talk so, Billy," she answered hesitatingly.

"Why?" he asked, hardly above a whisper, leaning across the table. "I want so much to have you like me, Juanita!"

"I do like you. But I can't—really!—I can't have you talk so," she protested, getting to her feet. "Please—"

"Please," he begged in his turn, detaining her with an arm lightly laid upon her shoulder. "Please like me!"

It was so sweetly said, so simply and boyishly, that she looked up at him with a smile struggling with the distress in her eyes.

"Billy dear, but I do!"

"Well, that's all I ask," he said. "Just give me a chance to make you—like me more!"

Somehow she was up-stairs again, again in the room that had witnessed her enchanted dream of Kent a few hours before. But she was oddly troubled now. She had left Billy abruptly at the pantry door, glad of Rosie's return, glad to escape. But his final words had been disquieting.

"Look here, is there any chance that my mother wants you to go to the Philippines on my account?" he had said suspiciously.

It was all so disturbing, Juanita reflected uneasily. Would he be foolish enough to ask his mother this outright? What a wretched, confused business the whole thing was, anyway!

Juanita got into bed, tired now in body, but feverishly and wearily alert in mind and soul. The scenes of the long day surged and receded in her brain.

Kent, coming into the up-stairs sitting-room when she was busy with Mrs. Chatterton the following morning, met her as if nothing had happened. The shock of it stunned Juanita, and she went on shifting papers and taking notes in a sick sort of daze.

"Hello, Kent," Mrs. Chatterton said, with a friendly glance. "Change that just a little,

Juanita," she resumed the interrupted business of the morning. "Say that Mrs. Chatterton can't answer now."

"Mr. Chatterton sent you his love, and he is on his way into the city with Billy," Kent said, dropping into a chair. "They'll be back about five o'clock."

"Oh dear, gone for the whole day!" Mrs. Chatterton, who had been at some little pains to arrange the whole matter a few hours before, said with pretty regret. "Has Billy a dinner engagement for tonight?" she asked carelessly.

"I imagine not—in fact, I know not. I heard his father say that you and he were dining with the Rogers, and Billy said that he would take care of himself; he was tired, would go to bed early," Kent said.

"I see." She was watching him steadily, plans moving behind her bright, determined eyes. Juanita would be gone at this time tomorrow—Juanita would be gone at this time tomorrow. In three short days she would be on the ocean. Patience. Patience.

"Did Juanita tell you that we had a great day yesterday, down the coast below Monterey?" he asked idly. The girl's throat constricted and her heart stopped. He could mention it so lightly.

"So she told me. I think that's all, Juanita," Jane said pleasantly. "Trunk packed?" she asked as the girl rose to go.

"Yes, Mrs. Chatterton," Juanita answered, her heart smoldering. She was crossing the hall, blind with bitter disappointment, a moment later, when she found Kent suddenly beside her.

"I've got to go right back," he said in an undertone, with a glance at one of the maids, who was pushing a vacuum cleaner back and forth some twenty feet away. "I'm going over her charity ball lists with her this morning. But I want to see you. Can we walk, at about five? I know some people are coming in to tea."

The tide returned gloriously to her heart. She smiled unsteadily over her shoulder, alarmingly near to tears in the quick revulsion. "I could," she answered, all roses again.

"I've been feeling badly about it," he said, his face dark and bitter. "I've no business to work on your feelings. You—you'd better forget it all, Juanita. That's what I want to say to you."

"Work on my feelings?" she stammered, the ground rocking under her. "How do you mean forget it?"

"I mean—forget it," he answered stubbornly, looking down.

"But, Kent," she asked, in a blank silence, "didn't you mean it?"

"Mean what?" he countered, almost harshly.

A horrible desolation and shame seized her. After all, what had been said, what had been changed? Tired, cold, in the safe cover of the dark he had kissed her, following their long, happy day; that was all.

"You—you—" she stammered, her throat thick now, her one wild desire to get away from him before she cried.

"Well, what?" he asked cruelly, his steady look upon her.

Pride saved her. The scarlet stung into her face and dried her tears, and she gave him one full, unflinching look before she turned away from him and mounted the stairs.

"Juanita," he muttered, staring down, frowning, "I mean it for your sake. I can't—it wouldn't be square—"

No answer. She let his voice die away into silence. She was at the near landing now, and she turned, opened the door that led from it to the back of the house, and without a glance or another word was gone.

Kent took one impulsive step after her, and paused. He stood perfectly still for a long minute, still frowning, still staring darkly down. Then he went back to Mrs. Chatterton's study.

Jane, admitting that she felt lazy this morning, had established herself in a deep chair, against whose dark tapestry her filmy soft

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morning gown spread itself lightly, like a silky cloud. She was telephoning when Kent returned. "You're a darling, Louise. And I'm so deeply obliged to you—I didn't want him to dine all alone tonight."

She hung up the receiver and stood the instrument upon the little table again. Kent flung himself into a chair opposite and eyed her with admiration.

"That's Billy who's being disposed of?"

"Yes. Mrs. Evans is most charmingly going to telephone him and ask him to dine with them. You know the girls were delightful to him last summer—he thoroughly likes them."

Invincible, he thought, watching her as she quite casually disposed of the matter. Her face was serene, her hands and eyes busy with the sheaf of letters she had picked up and was glancing at composedly. She and Mr. Chatterton were dining out tonight; but Billy was not to drift about the house this evening, left entirely to his own devices.

Kent employed himself with a diagram, studying it thoughtfully, making a little note here and there, lightly, with a pencil.

"Do tell me what you are doing; you look too industrious!" said Jane.

"I'm trying to see if a woman's charity entertainment can be run on anything like reasonable lines," he answered.

"You're altogether too good to bother about it, Kent," Jane murmured appreciatively. Their faces were rather close over the diagram. Now she stretched a hand to touch it, and her arm lay against his arm for a moment. She looked up into the face so near hers with a little laugh.

"Behave yourself, Jane," Kent said mildly.

Her innocent eyebrows arched. "Wasn't I?"

"The danger of women like you today," he answered sententiously, moving himself and his diagram beyond her immediate neighborhood, "is that you honestly don't know when you are behaving and when you are not."

"I suppose not," she agreed, with a deep sigh. And she looked at him, half smiling, half provocative, with her beautiful brown eyes.

Kent, at the table, made penciled notes. "Your expenses will be about fourteen hundred," he stated.

"Stop working over that horrible entertainment. I want to talk to you," Jane commanded him, in her oddly lazy, imperious voice.

He gave her an interrogative look, shrugged and obeyed her, taking the chair opposite her own.

"Talk," he echoed. "What about?"

"I have to tell you that, I suppose?" the woman countered dryly. "Kent," she added with more animation, as he merely glanced at her obliquely, "do you know that you have changed to me of late?"

The man was silent for a few long minutes, and Jane, surprised, altered her superbly reproachful, careless manner to something more real, less confident.

"Yes. I suppose I know that," he answered slowly after a while.

She seemed to ponder this, as a move in a game. "My fault?" she asked lightly, with eyes suddenly fully raised, and a hint of a smile.

"Yours? My dear Jane, not at all. But you remember," Kent said, "you remember rather suggesting that if Juanita Espinosa went to the Saint Monica Club I should keep an eye on her?"

"Did I?" Jane asked thoughtfully. "Yes, but she isn't going there now; she's sailing for Manila," she added, looking into the fire.

"Out of Billy's way," Kent suggested.

"Perhaps," his mother admitted serenely, but with a faint questioning frown.

Kent sat silent, his big finger-tips fitted together, his gaze, like hers, thoughtful and serious.

"This has—what," she asked, "what to do with you and me?"

"Everything, I suppose," Kent answered briefly.

She looked at him quickly, biting her lower

lip. Her breast moved once; then she shrugged, staring ahead of her again through half closed lids.

"Oh, I see!" she commented softly, almost with faint amusement. And for a long time there was utter stillness in the room. "How long has this been going on?" she asked, ending it.

"Nothing has been going on," he repeated somewhat harshly. "I have been fighting it for weeks. Now—there's no other way of putting it. I love her."

"Juanita?" Jane Chatterton supplied, in only the essence of her beautiful voice. "Well, I suppose I should be glad, Kent," she added after a pause, in a somewhat shaken tone. "You've told her?"

"No."

"Oh, but surely! Why not?" Jane sounded merely interested, quite composed.

He hesitated. "You, I suppose."

"I?" She echoed it with incredulity. "Really? Our friendship claimed that much?"

He gave her a rebuking look. She was playing now, but under the light, scornful, satirical notes of her voice something deeper betrayed her.

"It was no friendship on my part, Jane," the man said steadily, with a sort of helpless, stubborn honesty. "You know what it has been to me—everything, for a while. And I know what it has been to you—nothing. And now we end it, still friends."

"End—nothing?" she asked innocently, looking up. But there was steel in her soft, rich tone.

Kent made no answer.

"So I started it, suggesting that you should see 'Nita now and then?" Jane presently began again, as if she played with the idea.

"Not that, perhaps. But it occurred to me then that you might be glad to"—Kent hesitated—"to get rid of two responsibilities together," he finished, in a lighter tone.

"You and Juanita?" she supplied. "I have thought for many years that a good marriage would be the best thing in the world for her," she mused, nodding. "I should be glad, now. I should be glad," Jane repeated.

She got to her feet, walked to the hearth and stood looking down, and Kent watched her above his joined finger-tips.

"I should be glad now," she said a third time, in an undertone. And he knew that she was speaking to herself. "Kent," she added suddenly, impatiently, in a deeper voice, "you can't mean that you love this child?"

It flooded his heart with strange happiness to admit it. He stood up, joined her before the fire, his hands in his coat pockets, his look a little shamefaced, but steady.

"It's changed everything for me," he admitted, clearing his throat, smiling like a boy.

"I feel—different. It's all so simple—wife and home and work and all the rest of it. I've been fooling myself for years. I'm awake now—that's all."

"And I," Jane asked, "was part of the dream?"

"Something like that," he admitted, with the new, youthful grin.

"I'm glad," Jane said deliberately, without looking up. "I could have asked for nothing better. Nothing better," she repeated firmly.

"So that's that. When—when will you be able to marry, Kent?" she asked, rather low, her glance still on the fire.

"Any time. Any time my girl will!" he answered, happiness breaking through his voice.

"You have something put aside?" she asked, looking up in surprise. "I thought you—naturally—"

"Naturally," he agreed. "But yes, I have plenty," he told her. "I never mentioned it, but my own people—yes, there's plenty. It's been piling up for me—not millions," Kent interrupted himself, smiling, as her astonished look deepened, "but enough. More than she'll ever want. God bless her!"

Jane made no comment, lowered her somber gaze again as if she had already lost interest,

and stood so, a few feet away from him, drooping and silent.

"Kent," she said presently, and to his concern a quick step brought her so close to him as she spoke that her exquisite raised face and his down-bent one were but a few minute inches apart. "Kent, this is as it should be, dear," she said softly, slowly. "I'm glad. I'll make myself be glad! You deserve a young and lovely wife, and I surely owe her—I surely owe her something! But I shall miss—my friend," Jane finished, her smiling eyes suddenly brimming with tears and her lip shaking.

"Jane," he said tenderly, smilingly, "I shall be glad if you do, a little."

"A little!" she whispered, her throat thick, her hands gripping his shoulders. "Just—just as I begin to know how much—how much I need you!" she whispered, the tears running down her face now, and her lips bitten on the words.

"My dear—!" he said, touched.

"Oh, yes—yes—yes!" she breathed feverishly. "I know it now—I know now what you've meant, just moving about the house, just giving me a few minutes' talk here—a look across the bridge table—an hour like this. I'm glad it's 'Nita—poor, wronged little 'Nita!—and I'm going to make myself forget. But during these days, Kent, when I've been worried—when I've been a little frightened—I've come to see what you are to me!"

He put his big arms gently about her, and she clung to him, beautiful, fragrant, yielding at last. But he made no move to embrace her.

"Well," she presently said bravely, opening the glorious eyes she had closed tightly to stem tears, "well, this is as it should be, dear, and I am glad! So say good-by to me—and after a while we'll be the most wonderful friends—"

Tears were wet on her face; he saw her struggle to fight them.

"Kiss me, Kent," she whispered. "Kiss me for good-by, and it'll all be a dream—something we just fancied—"

She drew his dark, tall head down; her fragrant lips were on his, and in his arms her whole slender body swayed backward, her hands locked about his neck, her heart beating, against his.

"I love you," he heard her whisper. "I love you."

A door clicked behind them. Kent turned. It was Juanita, wide-eyed, ashen-faced, arrested on the threshold by what she saw, who was looking straight into his eyes.

Behind her Justine and a half-dozen other servants babbled and stared. There had been an accident. Carwood Chatterton was seriously hurt, Billy injured too, not so badly. They were bringing them home.

Instantly Jane was in command. The whole household, and Kent at its head, moved under her rapid direction. Rooms were prepared, nurses and doctors appeared as by witchcraft; telephones were answered in low tones; friends came softly, went softly.

She never faltered. Billy was badly shaken, his face bruised. Carwood Chatterton was crushed, smashed, shattered—it would be days before there could be even a verdict there, if indeed he were not dying now.

The strange hours went on; it was evening, and the house bloomed with soft lights. Jane went into Billy's room, sat beside him, patting his swollen hand, smiling at him.

He had a confused idea of the accident, yet the only one, for his father never stirred and the chauffeur had been instantly killed. It had been at San Bruno, on the crossing; the man was there in full sight, with the "Stop" sign, but Weeks had driven straight at the train.

Billy was not so injured, however, but that he drank chicken soup when his mother brought it to him, and was pleased to see Jim Turner when red-headed, scared-eyed Jim came tip-toeing in.

From Billy, Jane went to her husband's bedside. Long after the excitement had



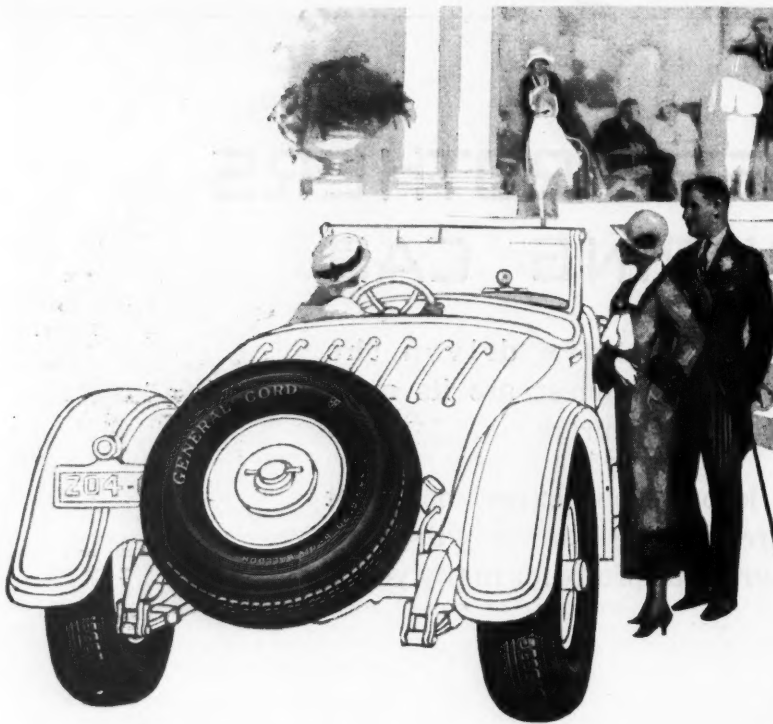
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quieted down, she kept her quiet vigil there. It was six o'clock when she told Kent softly that she would like to see Juanita.

"She brought us the news, Kent, and seemed to disappear. I've hardly seen her since—she did some telephoning for me just afterward. I wonder if you could find her?"

"I'll get her," he said.

He went off for a noiseless conference with the maids, scribbled a note. Waiting for her, he walked up and down the upper hall, his hands plunged in his pockets. No mistaking that she had come upon Jane and himself at a most unfortunate moment this morning. Supposedly, in her excitement, she had not sensed it fully. It had lasted a matter of seconds only. And she must know—she should be made to feel—that there was no significance to that.

There was so much besides that he wanted to prove to her. That he could be gentle, be inexact, that his wife would be one of the fortunate women of the world. That the troubled, cynical, bitter past was behind him; Juanita was to be his world now, Juanita and the old rancho, and rambles on the rocks, and rides into Solito.

His messenger came back with a report of failure.

Miss Espinosa had gone, if he pleased.

"Gone?" he asked blankly. "Gone where?"

Jane had come quietly out of her husband's room and was interrogating the maid with frowning concentration.

"She packed her trunk, madam, and it was took to the four-fourteen, and she says she would send an address."

"Of course she's gone to Elise! She was going tomorrow anyway," Jane exclaimed. "Get Mrs. Coleman, at the St. Francis, on the telephone, Kent, and see if she is there."

"She certainly wouldn't go without saying good-by," he muttered uneasily, the instrument already in his hands.

Mrs. Coleman knew nothing of Miss Espinosa. Wasn't she to come in tomorrow? Was this terrible story of an accident true? It was in the evening papers . . .

Kent hung up the telephone. "She's gone," he said quietly.

"But, my gracious," Jane said in a sharp undertone, "why should she? Where could she go?"

"That," Kent said in a low voice, as if to himself, and with a deep gravity she had never seen before on his dark face, "that is what I am going to try to find out!"

It was midwinter now, dark and wet. The rain fell day after day. The Toyo Kisen sailed for Manila without Juanita, and Billy went back to college. Old Chatterton lay quietly in his bed, pleased with his wife's constant attention, with the consummate skill with which she arranged his limited pleasures, his meals, his rest.

He would never get up again. He did not need a secretary now. And presently Kent, a strange, silent, unsmiling Kent, always gentle, courteous and obliging nowadays, went away too. He did not say that the house had changed for him, with the going of an eager-eyed, fair-haired little girl, who had slipped so quietly up and down the back stairways. He made no admission of the fact that early in the cold Sunday mornings he went alone to church now, and knelt watching the congregation with heavy, sad eyes, and walked home alone in the red winter dawns.

Juanita never came back—never wrote. Not at the rancho, not through her old convent school, not anywhere, in any way, could they find her. She had dropped out of their lives as strangely as she came in, leaving no trace behind her.

The end of the rainbow for Juanita is not so very far off—and yet, as you will see in the Next Instalment, she has yet to learn the hardest lesson in her strangely romantic life

The Inevitable Clinch

(Continued from page 71)

behind the wheel. "I wanted to be sure that you wouldn't do anything impulsive. I have no desire to see a police station and even less to return to the Merryweathers', but I do crave a little moment with you. Does the drive ahead lead to your house, by any chance?" Franny nodded. "Fine," said he. "You're behaving like a trump."

This was not Franny's intention. She wasn't a trump; she merely hoped that she held one. If she could only get him into the loft over the old carriage house . . .

Once, when the twins had been about fourteen, their father had been moved to suggest to them that perhaps some other game than being the James boys might prove a desirable diversion.

"This," he had elaborated, "is the idea. Why not become detectives for a change? I think you'll find it even more fun than a career of crime."

Lest they doubt this he had gone to considerable expense in selling the idea to them. Painters and plumbers and carpenters had been summoned from town, and these under his direction and the twins' fascinated eyes had transformed the loft of the carriage house into a police headquarters. There was a desk just like a police captain's, the windows were barred, and even a cell had been provided.

The twins had taken joyous possession of this new stage setting and for all of twenty-four hours they had seemed reformed characters. More recently it had been put to use by Franny as her "study." She had read in advertisements that magazines were crazy to get short stories, that anybody could write these with a minimum of preparation and that as much as a thousand dollars apiece was paid for such stories. Franny had a liberal allowance, but even so she could use an extra thousand frequently. She saw, therefore, no reason why she should not share in the general prosperity that all short story writers must experience.

No reason, that is, except that try as she might she couldn't seem to think of anything to write about.

"If I could only find a plot!" she had mused discouragingly.

Her present predicament might have suggested a plot to her, but it didn't. "If," ran her thought, "I can only get him up there and lock him in . . ."

The roadster came to a standstill. Her heart began to beat faster. But her victim offered no objections to walking into the trap. The only trouble was that he refused to walk in ahead of her.

"Ladies first," he insisted chivalrously. He was still between her and the door when she snapped on the lights.

"If this is a dream, please don't wake me up," he begged. And then, one by one, he cataloged the contents of the room. "A table, writing material and privacy! Allah is both great and good—" There he stopped short and frowned. "But I must have a typewriter," he said. "Haven't you got a typewriter?"

"Er—yes," said Franny, taken by surprise. "Get it," he snapped. "And make it fast, please."

Even before he had finished he had stripped off his evening coat and, after the most fleeting of glances for a place where he might hang it, let it drop to the floor. He then started to remove his necktie and collar.

"Well," he demanded of Franny, "what's keeping you?"

She felt like telling him to go to blazes. But she didn't. "I'll—get it," she said.

The instant the door closed behind her she locked it. She had him now! She had no intention of returning with a typewriter. She was going to phone the police. She sped across the grounds, through the snow-mantled Japanese garden to the house and took the telephone receiver from its hook.



Her Triumphant Moment

"YOU ARE AS RADIANT AS EVER," this other chap was saying.

The deuce! Of course she was radiant! He wondered why she seemed so much more beautiful tonight, and quite suddenly he determined to buy a certain diamond ring.

She had learned from Madame Jeannette how to select the correct shades of Pompeian Beauty Powder and how to apply it to achieve a youthful and entrancing beauty.

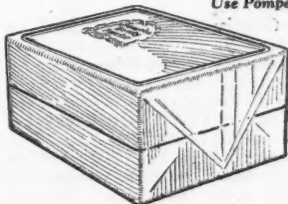
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TEAR OFF, SIGN AND SEND

Madame Jeannette, Pompeian Laboratories
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Dear Madame: I enclose 10c (dime preferred) for the new 1925 Pompeian Art Panel, "Beauty Gained is Love Retained," and the four samples.

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Address _____

City _____ State _____

Shade of powder wanted? _____

Then she had an afterthought. Perhaps she had better call the Merryweathers' first. She gave the operator the number and waited.

"This is the Merryweathers'," a voice, presumably the butler's, assured her.

"Is—is Mrs. Merryweather—still alive?" asked Franny.

There was an appreciable pause before an answer came.

"Alive? Certainly, ma'am. Who is this speaking?"

"Have you seen her recently?" Franny persisted.

"Just a minute ago. Who is this speaking, please?"

"No-nobody special," said Franny.

Her head reeled. What should she do next? It now occurred to her that she could not leave him there indefinitely. Nor could she phone the police. And yet—there was something funny about him.

She remembered tardily that he had demanded a typewriter. A sudden thought occurred to her. Was he an author? Authors, she knew, acted funny.

"Perhaps he can tell me how to write a story," she decided.

The housekeeper's typewriter was in the butler's pantry. It weighed two tons—her own estimate—but she managed to get it out of the house, across the Japanese garden and up to the old police headquarters.

Entering, she found him striding around, puffing furiously at a cigaret. He had stripped down to his trousers and undershirt. The latter, fortunately, was of what is known as the athletic type, exposing broad shoulders. These gave Franny a pause. Authors, she believed, did not have shoulders like oarsmen. And he was so young. Not as young as she had thought at first, perhaps, but no more than thirty. Besides, his hair was very short and she had an idea authors ran to long hair.

He glanced at her. "At last!" he groaned. "Where did you go for it—to New York? Put it down on the table there and for heaven's sake don't bother me."

Franny put the typewriter on the table. She did not speak, but after a moment he turned back to her.

"You still here?" he demanded irritably. "What are you waiting for?"

"Do—do you write short stories?" she demanded.

"No," he retorted curtly. "I don't. What of it?"

"I thought because you asked for a typewriter—"

"You don't think," he interrupted rudely, but eying her with more interest. "You're the typical modern girl. Young, pretty, spoiled. You believe every man should bow down and worship you, no matter what you say or do. You're the living embodiment of the ancient adage that if you give a woman an inch she'll take an ell. You act like a scullery maid and expect to be treated like a queen. Think? You flatter yourself."

"W-what?" gasped Franny.

"I'm so sick," he rushed on unheeding, "of your type that I—I gag when I think of you. I—"

He stopped short, stalked to the table and seated himself before the typewriter. He jammed a sheet into it and reached for his cigaret case. It was empty.

"Got to have a pipe," he murmured, as if addressing some invisible genie. "Get me a pipe."

Of one thing she was certain. Whatever he might be, words were wasted on him. She knew that one of the chauffeurs smoked villainous briars and she had an idea one might be found in the garage. She found one there. She started back with it and it occurred to her that he probably had no tobacco. So she went to the house. In the library she found only a humidor containing cigars. She took a handful of these.

"He can break them up and smoke them, darn him," she decided.

He took the pipe she proffered him, snorted

at the cigars but crumbled one up and filled his pipe with the fragments. These he lighted.

"You can get me some coffee now," he announced, by way of appreciation. "Steaming hot and strong."

Franny did not move. She had caught over his shoulder a glimpse of what he had written this far.

Act III

Just that. But it widened Franny's eyes terrifically.

"Why—you're a playwright!" she gasped. "A playwright?" he echoed. "Shades of William Shakespeare! My dear child, if you must have the truth I am no more than a sublimated stage-hand, creating puppets according to the prevailing mode."

He paused and ran his fingers through his hair. Franny approved of his hair, relentlessly cropped but rebellious.

"My dear Mr. Pyne," he resumed in a tone of savage mimicry. "We are eagerly awaiting the third act of your play. Please do not forget that it should be in our hands by Monday. We are tremendously interested in how you will work the latest of your delightful young heroines out of the situation you have created—"

Again his voice trailed off. He glared ferociously at the typewriter, lighted a match that burned down to his fingers and was then cast on the floor.

"The latest of my delightful young heroines!" he groaned then. And added, "Oh Lord—I suppose I could drive a truck!"

To Franny, who had believed that playwrights sat at elaborate desks, one finger against a high and placid brow, this was staggering. But she had no time to ponder that.

"Where's that coffee?" he demanded irritably. "I'll get it," she promised meekly.

The younger, prettier and worse of the James girls permitting herself to be so ordered! It was incredible. At any other time she would have doubted it herself. But a real live playwright. My gosh!

Besides, he was something outside her experience, something that apparently steam-rolled over people without even seeing them. This was her thought as she waited for the coffee to boil. Yet a second later, catching a glimpse of herself in a mirror, she hastily decided to powder her nose and did so.

He noticed no change in her. He was writing furiously when she returned, and he did not even glance at her when she set the coffee down. She had never seen such absolute concentration. She stood hesitant. The thought that she might—and probably ought—to leave him so, suggested itself. "But," she argued, "he might need something else."

The truth was, of course, that she didn't want to go. So she tiptoed away into the back-ground and sat down. He worked on, pausing only to light his pipe anew every few moments and letting the matches fall to the floor. Then he would plunge on.

"Gosh," thought Franny, "is that the way writers work?"

He was, she decided, much nicer looking than Bobby Beals and ten times as interesting. If Jessica had raved about him it might be understandable.

Here he came to his feet with an abruptness that toppled his chair and made her jump. He did not notice her. He stalked around the room, returned to the table and noticed the coffee. He poured out a cup, gulped at it and grimaced.

"Cold as Greenland's icy mountains!" he announced savagely.

Franny might have asserted herself by assuring him that coffee left standing for twenty minutes is, in the natural course of events, apt to cool. Instead: "I'll get it warmed for you," she promised, coming to her feet.

He turned and stared at her. "Oh, yes!" he said. "I remember. You're the younger and more incredible of the James girls." His eyes warmed. "I say," he added cordially, "you

are pretty! Mrs. Merryweather's description didn't half do you justice."

This she let pass as she reached for the coffee-pot.

"No—don't bother," he said. And added forthwith: "What would you do if I should try to kiss you? Try the old caveman stuff, that is."

Franny gave him a startled glance. "You just try and see!" she retorted crisply.

He promptly took her in his arms and kissed her. He managed to get away with it partly because he took her by surprise, but it was not that alone that left her helpless for an instant. She was, during that instant, conscious of a curious series of little thrills that ran through her like electric shocks.

Then swiftly she recovered herself. Wrestling herself free, she sent a straight right to his chin with a force that rocked him.

"My eye!" he exclaimed, regarding her with a cordial appreciation that ignored both his injury and her flushed anger. "Was that just a lucky hit—or do you carry wallops like that in regular stock?"

"You try again and see!" retorted Franny, breathing hard.

"Fine!" said he and plumped himself down at the typewriter and was off again.

Franny's fingers clenched. What did he mean by kissing her that way—and then returning abruptly to his work? She felt like pulling his hair. He had not, however, wholly forgotten her this time.

"That," he said graciously, after a moment, "was a great help. I'd got stuck, you see. I hope that Frances Fane—this is being written for her, you know—can get it across with the same force you did. I don't envy her leading man—but then, most leading men deserve as much and more."

"Do you mean," she demanded, "that you're putting that in your play?"

"It is a little strong for popular consumption," he admitted, as if the professional angle was all that need be considered. "But then, managers are always hollering for something with a punch in it. We'll give it to them." To that he added: "Now be a nice little girl and don't bother me. I'm ever so much obliged to you, but I've got to have this third act ready by Monday—or did I tell you that? Anyway, it's past your bedtime, isn't it?"

Franny gave him a withering glance that failed to wither him in the least. He had returned to his play. She hesitated for a second and then, elevating her pretty chin, marched out of the room. She slammed the door behind her, but she did not lock it. She had forgotten that there was ever any question of that.

It was not until she reached her room that she remembered that there had been blood on his shirt bosom and its presence there was yet to be explained. This gave her pause, delaying her preparations for bed. Instead she stood for an appreciable interval looking out of one of the windows of her room. The window, in fact, that gave her a view of the carriage house. She could just distinguish him, still furiously at work.

He certainly did not look like a murderer. But he certainly acted like a nut. The way he ordered her around!

"As if," she thought indignantly, "he were a king in Babylon and I his Christian slave."

And—she could not ignore it no matter how she tried—the way he had kissed her. As if—as if she were a dummy that he could experiment with!

"He'll pay for that yet!" she assured herself.

A match flamed over in the carriage house. She saw it applied to the chauffeur's pipe and then cast aside carelessly.

"Good heavens!" she gasped. "He'll set the place afire yet!"

It became plain to her that she should not go to bed as she had intended. And, as she would have maintained, she preferred. Somebody should watch him, if only to act as fireman. No one can doubt the logic of that. And possibly there was logic in the manner in which she prepared herself for the task. She drew her

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If your dentist has not already handed you our booklet on tooth abscesses and a sample of our dentifrice, you may have both of these by addressing a postal to Lambert Pharmacal Co., Saint Louis.

HIDDEN WELLS OF POISON IN YOUR MOUTH?

curtains and from her wardrobe produced a frock usually reserved for more formal affairs than prospective fires. But then, so many people look their worst during a fire, why should one not, when the chance offers, try to look one's best?

This was plainly her intention. She changed swiftly and then surveyed herself before the mirror. The frock she now wore exposed some of her shoulders and most of her pretty back. But possibly she wasn't thinking of fires after all.

"I'll bet," she assured herself, "he'll not call me 'my dear child' now. And perhaps he'll look at me as if he really saw me!"

There was no doubt but what he might, if she made the desired dent on his vision, see a great deal of her, including a scar that marred the pink and white of her shoulder. This she had sustained in a duel with Jessica, fought out with swords that two earlier ancestors had carried off to war with them—one having been through the Revolution and the other through the Civil War.

At twelve the scar had seemed a highly desirable physical attribute. Now, suddenly, she saw it as a blemish. It did not occur to her that a man might have felt the urge to put his lips to it. She pondered it and then, slipping an evening wrap over her shoulders, started back to the carriage house.

At the door she felt a sudden inexplicable shyness, but this she mastered. She opened the door slowly.

"Oh, my Lord!" he groaned. "What now?"

He had lifted an irritated face from his work to glare at her. But slowly his expression changed. There was no question but what he saw her.

"Pretty, pretty!" he murmured appreciatively. "Where are you off to—a dance?"

"At one o'clock in the morning!" she protested.

"Great Scott—is it that late?" he demanded. His eyes went back to the sheet of paper in the typewriter. A second later he was back at work again.

Franny bit her lip. She felt the impulse to go out and slam the door again. Instead she closed it very softly and then moved almost furtively to the chair she had previously occupied. There she sat down.

The volunteer fireman was on the job.

Presently the fire hazard paused but only to gulp a mouthful of coffee which he had apparently become reconciled to, for though it must be colder than ever he drank it without comment. But then he had, she realized, forgotten her existence again.

"I might as well have gone to bed!" she thought discouragedly.

Presently she glanced at her watch. Heavens—it was almost two! Was he going to work on forever? She glanced at him. Apparently he was. She yawned like a sleepy kitten. Would he notice, she wondered, if she helped herself to some of his coffee?

The question remained unanswered. Her eyes closed. She slept. The typewriter rattled on, but she slept like a child—a very pretty, rosy child. The belaborer of the typewriter might well have paused to consider her for his own good both as a man and as an artist. But he worked on and on.

The late gray December dawn was streaking the west when he finally thrust back his chair and rose to stretch luxuriously, exultantly. "I guess that will make old Jorrock open his eyes," he announced.

He had been at work steadily for hours, yet, like a man who has raced for a goal and achieved it, he was too uplifted to feel weariness. Exaltation was in his eyes, until suddenly they perceived Franny. The wrap had fallen away from her shoulders, leaving them and the delectable scar—the adjective was his own—revealed.

"Good Lord!" he gasped.

From her, his eye went around the room. He stared at the table with the remnants of the coffee service on it. He saw the matches on the floor, and beyond, his evening coat and

shirt, lying where he had let them fall. He took the pipe from his mouth and looked at it with puzzled eyes.

For once words failed him.

The creative instinct, which he damned but of which he was the willing slave none the less, had been riding him hard, he knew. He knew too of the things he was apt to do and say at such moments. Kind friends had assured him that men had been shot for less.

His eyes went back almost guiltily to Franny. The younger and prettier of the James girls! She whom Mrs. Merryweather had said was incredible—and a terror.

Incredible she seemed. But a terror? She slept like a tired baby. He felt a swift surge of tenderness. Spoiled unquestionably, but lovely. The typical modern girl—the sort he had just finished a darn good play about.

Here was a situation such as he had never handled, even in his plays. The lady slept. She and he had been here together through the night. Some might say that she was compromised. She was; but he knew her type too well to fear that she would suggest any such thing.

The only question before him was what he had best do. Should he attempt to steal away, quietly and without waking her?

The question answered itself. Franny's eyes opened slowly. She looked up at him under drowsy lashes with the unself-conscious stare of a baby. Then as her vision cleared, she smiled, sweetly if sleepily.

"You're the man with the blood on his shirt!" she murmured.

"Blood on my shirt?" he repeated. "Oh, yes—I must have cut myself while shaving."

"Shaving?" she questioned, rather more wide-awake now.

"I always think best while shaving," he explained. "And I had an idea for the last act of my play just after dinner tonight. So I went up-stairs and started shaving. Just automatically, you know, to help develop it."

"But you were out in the snow when I found you!" she protested.

In spite of her night in the chair and the murmurs of certain cramped muscles she had an almost exquisite sense of well-being. There was no question but what he was seeing her now. And with undivided attention.

"That was Mrs. Merryweather's fault," he explained with a grin. "She means well—that woman. First it was an inquiry whether I felt ill. When I told her I didn't and merely wanted to jot down some notes, she departed, apparently satisfied. But five minutes later she returned to ask if I needed anything—paper or writing materials."

"Just like me!" remarked Franny. "I kept interrupting you."

"Oh, you didn't make any difference!" he assured her magnanimously. "After I once get started nothing can stop me. It's when I'm trying to put things together in my mind that interruptions irritate me."

"You certainly sounded irritated," she assured him.

"I suppose I have a thousand apologies to make."

"You said I was spoiled and ill bred."

"Well—aren't you? Most girls are nowadays. And you see I wrote one play about the modern girl that proved a success and they won't let me write about anything else. I get rather fed up on writing about her at times. In fact I sometimes feel the impulse to murder her for a final curtain. Anything to get away from the inevitable clench. The very thought of love makes me positively ill. I don't suppose you can see it, but to me love seems such a sticky, messy—"

"It's worse than that!" Franny assured him, thinking of Jessica.

"What?" he demanded, looking startled.

"You don't mean that—"

"So you didn't murder anybody?" interrupted Franny hastily.

"Not even Mrs. Merryweather," he assured her with the grin that made him look incredibly boyish. "Though the woman deserved

it. She literally hounded me out of the house with her well-meant attentions. I didn't care where I went or how, so long as I escaped her and got somewhere where I could be alone for a few minutes."

"And then I appeared!"

"Most opportunely! You were a gift of the gods. You provided precisely the place of refuge I was looking for and the sort of girl I wanted as a type."

"Who acts like a scullery maid—and expects to be treated like a queen?"

"Precisely—and who's so adorable that she gets away with it!"

The vigor with which he spoke startled her. And him!

"Oh!" she said involuntarily.

Then a curious thing happened. To both came the memory of how he had held her in his arms and kissed her. Their eyes met and swiftly dropped and Franny knew that she was blushing like an idiot.

"I—I must have fallen asleep," she heard herself saying inanely. "I think I'd better go."

The evening wrap she wore draped itself around her knees as she started to her feet and she, usually so sure-footed, would have fallen had he not caught her. Briefly he held her so, and again she felt those curious little thrills course through her like electric vibrations.

"Are—are you going to use this in your play too?" she asked, managing to smile but unable to meet his eyes.

He did not answer for a moment. Then: "I have a hunch," he said deliberately, "that I am going to use a lot of you—in all my plays, if I can manage it."

Again those funny little thrills.

"And—and want to murder me in the last act, of course?" she suggested.

"Now you're fishing! You know what I mean. You do, don't you?"

Franny suspected. But she had no intention of saying so. "Of course," she acknowledged. "The very thought of love makes you ill. It's so sticky and messy—that's what you said!"

"And you agreed," he reminded her. "But—we didn't mean it, either of us, did we?"

His eyes dazzled her. "I—think we don't either of us know what we mean just now," said she. "Aren't we both—a little out of our heads? I—"

She got no further. He was a most impulsive young man and, having decided it was necessary to take her in his arms, he proceeded to do so at once. "You blessed darling!" said he huskily. "Thank you for that 'both.' Of course we are. If we weren't you'd hate me. I've behaved terribly—I know I don't deserve this luck. It's incredible and yet—"

"But—but how can you be sure so soon!" she interrupted.

"You mean how can I be sure—or how can you?" he demanded.

Franny hesitated, but for no more than a second. Then she proved herself very much the modern girl. "I mean—how can you?" she confessed.

His arm tightened about her. "Because," he said, "I have precisely that feeling that has always struck me as ridiculous when I have tried to make it seem real in a play. And that is that you were made for me and that somewhere, way back in the beginning, this night was arranged for so that I might find you and—well, if that isn't love at first sight, what is it?"

He gave her no chance to answer. His impetuous, questing lips dropped to the little scar on her shoulder and then, lifting, found hers ready to surrender.

Presently—some minutes later—she spoke. "When you kiss me," she murmured, "it—it runs right down to my toes."

"You little plagiarist!" he said. "Don't you know that's not original?"

"I know," she confessed dreamily. "Jessica said it. I didn't believe her but—but it does." She looked up at him. "But," she added, "you are different!"



Her Honeymoon

Letter Continues

"..... and everywhere you go in Vienna—the tea dances, the opera, the fashionable Night Clubs, you see this gorgeous new rouge—so brilliant, so absolutely glowing with the joy of living! In Paris it is the same—everyone is wearing it. I tried to get some. But it wasn't the shade. Not until I got to London was I able to get the right shade. It is called PRINCESS PAT Vivid. Do try to get some. With your eyes it will be wonderful."

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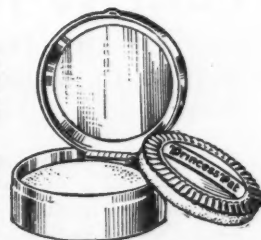
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A Daughter of Today (Continued from page 61)

automobile than had occurred of old in the dim-lit parlors and the hammock-hung porches. Exactly the same things occurred there, according to the natures of the couples.

But the moralists jumped to the most immoral conclusions, procured an ordinance forbidding such trysts, and set the constables to patrolling the streets and roads and arresting all spooners. Puritanism and cleverness have rarely gone together, and the only result of the crusade had been that the young lovers of Perrytown moved farther out into the country or took a chance with the police. No one has ever yet devised a sure way of policing the police, and the Perrytown constables added new bribes to the old.

And this it was that paved the way for the devastation of the beast who won the name of the Badge Bandit.

His first exploit was kept out of the town papers, but it had a wildfire circulation among the gossips. Bruce Blake told the story before he realized what he was doing. He had taken pretty little Sally Corson out for a drive. They had stopped at the side of the road "to watch the view and discuss their approaching marriage." Suddenly an unknown man had thrust a pistol into Bruce's ear and told him that he and the girl were under arrest. The man flashed a badge to prove his authority.

He made Bruce get out into the road and turn over all his valuables. After he had robbed Sally in her turn, he leaped into the car and drove off with her. When Bruce tried to prevent this horror, the Badge Bandit shot him down and left him for dead. An hour later Sally was found by the side of the road, in the condition that is known as "better dead." The next morning Bruce's car was discovered wrecked in a ditch.

Everybody had read of this fearful thing happening in other towns. It had never ended with one atrocity but had gone on for months, always with the complete bafflement of the police, who did nothing more than pick up clues that ended in the pigeonholes of the district attorney.

And now Perrytown people said: "It has come to Perrytown!"

Mr. and Mrs. Macready and the other parents had no difficulty in keeping their children at home for a while. Then they went out again. A week later Harry Pento had his skull beaten in and the Badge Bandit carried off his companion, Mrs. Nettle Prout. Harry could not say that they had been "discussing their approaching marriage."

Again the lonely roads were lonely. But love would not be denied.

The parents of Varue were frantic when she said she would rather die than stay cooped up in the house all evening every evening. There was no way of keeping her in if she decided to go out, for the good old Puritan days and laws have long since passed which made disobedience of parents a crime punishable with death.

Love seeking its mate finds peril everywhere and in the peril a further loveliness.

Varue welcomed the Badge Bandit in a way because he gave her a new test of her lovers. Her man of men must have courage above all things and she had had no chance to apply the ordeal of bravery.

Two or three of the foremost contenders for her heart automatically eliminated themselves by finding various reasons for not motoring out of nights with her. They were sane and worthy men and they had a quite proper objection to submitting themselves to the attentions of an assassin and a ravisher who struck from the dark. They had altruistic reasons too, and while none of them would admit that he was afraid of any man on earth, they all stated that their regard for Varue forbade them to risk her precious integrity.

Varue scratched them from her list. Just one young man admitted that he was afraid of the Badge Bandit—Malcolm Stone. He had been a soldier too—drafted, but later

decorated. Malcolm told Varue, with more truth than novelty:

"I was scared only once in France. That was from the moment I landed till the moment I left. They said I was a hero and pinned medals on me, but I must have been in a trance at the time, for I couldn't remember a thing and I darned near fainted when they told me about it afterward."

Varue put him down as a non-eligible, but he insisted on calling on her at a time when her list of callers was not overcrowded. The Badge Bandit had brought on a positive epidemic of night-work among the young men. Also an epidemic of breakdowns in automobiles that had hitherto "made their little old sixty an hour without a stutter."

One night Varue would have been left at home unprotected from her family if Malcolm had not drifted in. She was all for a moonlight spin, but Malcolm flatly declined to ride.

"I'll walk to a movie with you, but I've got all the medals I'm going to risk getting. The Badge Bandit decorates you with a cracked bean or a bullet hole and I'm just naturally fed up on cartridge music."

Rather than indulge in a game of sit-out with the family, Varue consented to stroll down to the Perrytown Palace and see a film unrolled.

It was a good, honest, reliable picture, omitting none of the standardized ingredients. At the proper moment the villain found the heroine alone in a room, locked the door, pocketed the key, advanced into a great close-up with a magnificent leer and seized her in his dastardly embrace.

As usual, she did nothing to disturb his make-up. She beat him on his massive chest a few times and swung back at an inviting angle of twenty-five degrees.

The hero arrived on schedule, broke in the door and knocked the villain down, then waited for the villain to get up and knock him down. With equal Queensbury courtesy the villain waited till the hero got up and knocked him down. After the necessary amount of furniture was thrown and broken, the two rolled over and over a number of times. Eventually, just before the hero expired, he landed the knock-out smash and the villain ceased villaining till the next picture.

All this while the heroine comported herself according to the rigid etiquette of the silent drama. Though her lover was being massacred at her feet and her life and virtue were at stake, her hands clung to one another instead of breaking everything handy over the villain's head.

Of course she knew that the hero would win, but the audience was always led to hope that just this once he might not, though up to date no professional hero had ever been whipped by any professional villain.

Malcolm was properly thrilled but Varue was indignant. She groaned on the way home:

"These movie heroines make me sick. I'm just nauseated with girls that stand by idle while their fool lovers get butchered for their worthless sakes. Why do they always wring their hands? I'd like to wring their necks!"

"What would you have done in that girl's place?"

"I'd have ground the villain's eyes out with my high heels, or stuck a pair of open scissors in him and closed 'em."

"Whew!" whewed Malcolm, not at all impressed by her pretty ferocity. "Oh no, you wouldn't!"

"Oh, yes, I would!"

"Oh, no, you wouldn't!"

"Oh, wouldn't I, though?"

"I can't believe it."

"Just wait and see. Take me out and give me a whack at the Badge Bandit."

"Heaven forbid!"

"What would you do if the Badge Bandit stuck a pistol in your ribs?"

"I'd stick up my hands."

"And what if he tried to run off with me?"
 "Let's not talk of it."
 "But I want to know. Would you jump him?"

"With a loaded gun in his hands?"
 "Oom-hoom."
 "I hope not."

"But if he started away with me?"
 "Well, what could I do? I could get shot. But that wouldn't help you any. I can't run much since the war and I'm gun-shy."

He felt that her eyes seared him and branded him as a cowardly cur, but he loved her too well to pretend even in an imaginary case. He suffered direly when she turned from him in scorn and took her hand from his arm.

"Well, all right, you can let him take me. But he won't have much fun, I can tell you. He'd have to knock me unconscious and I shouldn't think that would interest even a maniac. He'd take me cold or not at all."

"For the Lord's sake, change the subject," said the decorated warrior.

When Varue left him, she scratched him also off the almost exhausted list of candidates for her affections.

A week of evenings at home listening to the radio or the family prattle maddened Varue till she was all but ready to go out alone and invite the Badge Bandit to call.

Then a tennis tournament in the next town was announced and crowds motored over from Perrytown. Varue had offended so many of the gallants that she was not invited by any of them. She was driven to asking Malcolm Stone to be her guest.

He had been the champion of Perrytown before the war put a permanent crimp in his legs and disabled his right arm for any more exacting work than handling a table knife and a fountain pen.

The tournament lasted till dark and too late to reach Perrytown for dinner. So Malcolm suggested that they stop at a pretty road-house on the way.

It was fairly late when they finished and the moonlight had wooed them on the porch where their dinner was served. He drove the car back and grew very tender, and Varue felt so sorry for him that she let him talk of love without ridicule.

The moon seemed to beseech them not to waste her dulcet splendor and when the car reached the very spot where Hilary Welch had forfeited her interest, Malcolm gave the wheel a little turn that sent the car into the deeps of moon-dappled shadow.

Varue smiled benignly as he shut off the engine. When Malcolm put his arms about her with entreaty and solemnity her heart was filled with an *attendrissement*—not so much for him as for all the lovers in the world, for love itself, and for the sweet sake of the moon and the clear harmony that trembled in the blue-imbued air.

When Malcolm with a priestly adoration pleaded for a kiss as for a boon of priceless value, she could not play the miser and she smiled almost maternally as she made him a gift of her lips. Since she could in nowise deplete the store of her kisses, she rewarded his gratitude with more.

When he clenched her in his arms she proved to him how strong her own arms were and embraced him stoutly, finding a mysterious deference in his very arms weaker than her own, since his muscles had been shattered with a piece of ragged shell.

She wondered if he were not perhaps, after all, the one she sought. He had been a hero once and that was once more than most of the men had been.

She knew love well. She had been embraced of many men, and kissed by not a few. There was a radiant peace in Malcolm's arms, a beatitude that promised to be lasting. She gazed at him in the azure twilight and seemed to see his soul and to find it beautiful. Dark as it was, he found her eyes with his lips and kissed them shut, murmuring:

"I love you! I lo—"

"You're under arrest!"

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The alien voice had the teeth of a saw and its snarl. Malcolm felt in the back of his neck a cold steel circle that was the very O of death.

He let his arms fall away limply from Varue and her eyes flashing open saw back of him a man who was so tall that though he stood on the ground he loomed above her. Even as she gaped and Malcolm craned his neck against the pistol barrel to see who spoke, the shadow was dimly broken with a shield of silvered metal and the voice croaked:

"There's my badge."

She heard him open the door of the car and order Malcolm to hop out. Malcolm was grinning stupidly, almost giggling with his contemptible discomfiture. He backed out awkwardly and the Badge Bandit growled:

"Shell out!"

Malcolm went through his pockets, emptied his loose change into the bandit's left palm, put in his watch and spilled the chain on top of it, and after a prod from the muzzle of the pistol, produced a wallet none too plump and handed it over.

The ruffian, whom Varue was studying with intense curiosity and an uncanny dread, felt himself cheated by the modesty of Malcolm's wealth. He grumbled: "You ain't worth stickin' up. For two cents I'd bust your ugly conk."

"Oh, don't hurt him!" Varue pleaded. "He was wounded in the war and he hasn't been able to earn much money."

"Is 'at so! Well, how's you?"

There was such a loathsome caress in his tone and in his glance that for the first time Varue realized what was before her. She saw herself in the place of his other victims and remembered that the gossips had had no more mercy on them than the bandit. Her heart seemed to turn a somersault and then flop over.

Malcolm groaned and horror shocked his muscles so that the bandit turned to him and commanded: "Step back across the ditch, you! And don't make no false moves or I'll kill you!"

Malcolm retreated a little and paused in the irresolution of one of his trances. The bandit had to force him back step by step until he was on the other side of a tiny rivulet glistening along the gutter by the side of the road.

Then the bandit, still keeping an eye on Malcolm, leaned into the car toward Varue and putting out his hand, snapped his fingers.

Hoping for a moment that she could bribe him to let her go, Varue stripped her fingers of their unimportant rings, ripped from her ears a pair of inexpensive pendants and unfastened a small brooch at her throat. The bandit stuffed them into his pocket and put out his hand for more. She said:

"That's all I have."

His eyes ran about her and discovering a little necklace and a locket hanging down inside her frock, fumbled for the chain with lingering interest and hesitated a moment with his ghastly hand on her cringing flesh.

Then, with a sudden satyr-like noise, he shifted the pistol to his left hand, swung into the car, found the starter with his foot and set the engine to trembling with a terror like Varue's. She tried to break through the door at her side, but his right arm thrust her over in a heap. He slammed the door shut, pushed in the clutch and set the gear in low.

A loose monkey-wrench in the bottom of the car got in his way and he kicked it aside against Varue's ankle. But she did not feel the pain in her greater agony of fear. She cried out in protest as the car bucked and started, and knocked the gear-shift back to neutral.

The sound of her voice set Malcolm's gears in mesh and he dashed across the little water and flung himself on the running board. The bandit's right hand caught the pistol from his left and aimed it at Malcolm. But Varue seized his elbow and dragged it back and the bullet went into the sky. With the same wrench she threw the wheel around so that the car, like a stupid horse, turned its head to the ditch and stopped.

The bandit freed himself from Varue's clutch

by a backward slash of his elbow that struck her in the chest with the force of a dull bayonet. By this time Malcolm had grasped the bandit by the right wrist and the throat. As the bandit tried to rise and shake him loose, Malcolm dragged him through the door, whose weak lock failed to hold.

And now the bandit, far taller and bulkier than Malcolm, threw all his weight upon him and they went down in the weeds with a crash that took the breath from the soldier.

The bandit struck at Malcolm and his big left fist grazed his jaw as he twisted his head aside. The bandit's horrible fingers struggled to reach the boy's eyes and gouge them out. With all his might Malcolm held back that grisly spider, while keeping off the pistol with his other hand.

Varue, paralyzed with fear, watched and wrung her hands like the girl in the movies. But she was not so much afraid as rapt with wonderment at the lovable sacrifice of Malcolm, who drew the murderer upon himself for her sake. She was falling in love.

Then, with a sudden contortion, the bandit worried to his knees and stood erect. As he steadied himself to aim his pistol at Malcolm, the boy seized his foot and twisted him off his balance. But the pistol was coming round to end the matter when Varue, with a sense of wifeliness, joined her heart's husband in their common cause and flung herself from the car at the bandit's arm.

As she clutched he fired, and the dust smoked up in the weeds alongside Malcolm's heart. Before he could fire again Varue hung all her weight on his arm and dragged it down and, though the bandit turned to throttle her, she sank her teeth into his wrist so viciously that he let the pistol drop. She kicked it and it splashed into the little rivulet, tossing up silver spray with the sound of a diving frog.

Before the bandit could seize Varue, Malcolm had brought him down again upon himself. But now the bandit's hands were free and they went straight to Malcolm's throat and burrowed deep in the flesh in spite of Malcolm's frenzied battle against suffocation.

Varue, weeping and frantic, could not find a place to intervene. Her hands beat together futilely till a croaking death-rattle from Malcolm so startled her that she buried one hand in the bandit's heavy hair and dragged his head back. As his face came up into the moonlight and bared his long throat, she gave him a ferocious cut across his Adam's Apple with the side of her hand.

An uncouth howl issued from his awful pain and he went over on his side. But Malcolm was too weak to move.

While Varue looked about for some weapon of further offense, a stone, a club or something, anything, the bandit rose with the burly fury of a grizzly and made after her. She backed away in terror, but did not dare to flee down the lonely road. She did not want to run away. For all her terror she would rather die than abandon that poor young man who for all his terror had been willing to die rather than abandon her to the mercies of the beast.

She ran round and round the car, trying to remember what she had once learned of self-protection. The brute strode after in pursuit. At last she recalled one lesson and hastily slipped her arms out of her light cloak and suddenly turning, whipped it over his head.

While he buffeted about under it, she ran in close and lifting her knee, drove it into the pit of his stomach.

He yelped with excruciation and his hands dropped. Ruthless as a little demon settling down to the business of disabling an opponent who had no code to appeal to, she threw aside every tradition of delicacy, stepped forward again with her left foot between the bandit's drooping knees, stooped far over, seized the left hem of his trousers and giving a great hunch, threw the bewildered giant over on his face. Then she whirled and bent his left leg back at the knee till he whimpered in agony and terror. Just before she cracked the bone he pleaded:

"Oh—Oh—don't break it! I give in."

She ought to have broken it, but her primeval ferocity was hampered by long traditions of sportsmanship and she let him go, dropping down by the side of Malcolm, who was just coming back from death.

A shadow fell across his wan face and she looked up to see the bandit looming over her, rejoicing in her ridiculous mercy and her easy conquest.

As she rose and turned to escape his arms enveloped her and his hands met across her breast. He began to drag her backward away, but she spun round inside his embrace and raising her hands like the talons of a swooping eagle, drew them down across his face and eyes and almost brought his eyeballs out of their bleeding lids. While he yowled in desperate rage she kicked him on the exquisitely tender shins with her sharp French heels and beat him on the nose and eyes with both fists; and her teeth ground the flesh of his fluttering hands and nearly brought off one ugly finger.

He was like a man who has closed with a wildcat and wishes he hadn't. He tore himself from her in a spasm of struggle and flung her off with such force that she went back against the car and sank into the embrasure of the open door.

She was breathing so hard that her body rose and fell as if across an invisible washing-board. She was nauseated with the disgust of her first encounter of flesh against flesh in hatred. Her legs were shaken so that her very knees chattered together.

She could not have run from him one step, though she saw that he was regaining his wind and his wrath and was gathering himself for a final rush that should overwhelm her utterly. His teeth gleamed through the blood from his eyes and mouth and the hideousness of him was of itself a weapon beating down her resistance.

At his first lurch toward her, she huddled farther into the car and her hand touched the monkey-wrench she had flung there carelessly in her haste to be off to the tennis games. It was a clumsy thing but divinely beautiful for her need, and when she brought it up over her head, her right hand met her left. As the Badge Bandit came forward she brought it down like a bludgeon on his skull.

It was so like cracking an egg that she sickened and slumped forward in a faint and slid to the ground.

Two automobiles went by but their drivers dared not stop. It was dangerous to stop for anything now-a-nights. Later, two officers of the police patrol, organized to prevent spooning and recently devoted to collecting cold evidence against the Badge Bandit, drove up and seeing Varue's car standing as idle as an empty-saddled war-horse on a battle-field, got out and advanced with pistols at the ready.

They found Malcolm Stone clutching at his throat and drowsily delighting in the luxury of a deep breath. They found Miss Varue Macready coming out of a coma and trying to decide which were her feet and which were her hands. And they found a total stranger lying on his face in a puddle of dusty blood, apparently not delighting in anything or trying to decide anything.

Varue had proved her point that a girl who wants to—really wants to—can take care of herself. So she told Malcolm that he could take care of her from now on.

They both preferred to take their adventures vicariously for a while and they went to a movie—a rather tame one after their own experience. But it had, like many another, a scene in which a young man of diabolic wickedness is redeemed to perfect virtue by an operation on his skull.

"It would be nice if this Badge Bandit should come out of the hospital and join the Y. M. C. A. as a result of my nifty work with the little monkey-wrench—wouldn't it, honey?"

"Very nice!" said Malcolm. "Very nice indeed! After all, we owe it to him that we are sending out invitations."

Sheiks I Have Met by Alice M. Williamson (Continued from page 75)

I knew. The sheik didn't appear to respond very ardently; but on the return journey, nearing Jerusalem, he quietly remarked that he would like to marry me.

"I think I could make you happy," he added in his nice French. "I and my tribesmen who have conducted you have our home near here, and by going a few miles out of our road today we can show it to you."

"I should love to see your home," I said, "but I'm so sorry—I can't very well marry you because I'm already married."

"That need make no difference," argued the sheik. "You can divorce your husband, or let him divorce you. I suppose you have money of your own? In that case, everything will be easy. I too am married, to a cousin, but I will divorce her for you if you object to my having more than one wife."

"I certainly would object!" I gasped.

"Then that is settled," he said resignedly. "However, in any case, as the new wife you would have been the favorite."

I told him that it was not quite so settled as he thought. I had a strange weakness for sticking to the husband I had left at home.

The nice young sheik said that he was very disappointed indeed. He would really have liked to marry me. But in any case there was no reason why I shouldn't see his home, since it was so near and would interest me, no doubt.

Soon we were there. To my eye, it was a very squalid village, though picturesquely situated, and to get into the living part of the sheik's house, we had to pass through stables for donkeys and horses. Up a stone stairway, however, we came to rooms of real charm. The walls were whitewashed, and had a colorful frieze of texts from the Koran. There were no chairs, only divans, or rugs to sit on, and when a meal was served we ate it squatting, tailor fashion, round an immense brass tray.

I dined with the sheik and two of his younger brothers, also his cousin brother-in-law; and this was far from being proper. I should have been in the harem, the ladies of which never dreamed of eating with the men. After a most elaborate meal of a whole lamb stuffed with rice and pistachio nuts, and very rich sweetmeats, for all of which we used our fingers as forks, the sheik washed my hands with rose water in a bowl and dried them with a fine linen napkin. This was his nearest approach to familiarity, and afterwards he escorted me to the harem.

"Now is where the trouble begins!" I thought, gazing anxiously at my maid.

But not at all! I saw for the first, though not for the last time, how homely and harmless a place the harem of a sheik can be. With the exception of the wife, a much-rouged and hennaed but featureless lady, the place was full of mothers and aunts, small children and withered grandmothers.

It seemed to be expected that I should give my hostesses presents of my own jewelry, which they demonstratively admired; so I did separate myself for their benefit from what I could

bear to part from. And this is all, all that happened to me in the sheik's harem.

That was Palestine.

My next experience with sheiks was in Egypt. I went with one—at least he said he was a sheik—and the large, expensive caravan he provided for a short excursion through the desert to the Fayoum. He was handsome and didn't forget the fact for a moment; but he was incredibly ignorant and silly. At evening he sang me Arab love songs in the Arab tongue. But he didn't sing passionately at all, and the songs sounded like cats wailing at each other on roofs at home. I wanted to be stirred by romance, but I just couldn't be. It was too bad.

At the end of the excursion this (alleged) sheik said that I wouldn't be surprised to hear he was humbly in love with me, and would never, never forget my beauty and charm. He would serve me for life if I would but take him with me wherever I went. But when I argued that I couldn't do this, he was quite satisfied with a souvenir of me in money.

At last, in Algiers, I met some far more imposing sheiks. It was at the Governor's yearly ball at the Palace, and these glorious persons were true princes of the desert. Meeting them, we were invited to visit them when we should travel through the south a little later. Innocents that we were, we didn't know that we were hardly expected to accept.

We did accept, and we felt very wise in remembering a thing we had heard—that, though Arabs verbally made all their possessions yours, they expected a good many of your own to become theirs. Before leaving Algiers with its smart shops, we bought what we imagined would be acceptable gifts, rich, yet small and easy to pack. We invested heavily in exquisite French soaps, colored bath crystals and perfumes in marvelous bottles.

In strange desert places we would stop at the (more or less) palace of a great sheik and be treated with ceremonious courtesy. A short call was not permitted. We must remain to at least one meal. Sometimes we were practically forced to stay the night, at the risk of offending our hosts if we refused, though oddly, in every case as soon as we had given our presents, we felt an atmosphere of controlled fury surrounding us. Later we learned that though Arabs love perfumes and scented soaps, they have a weakness for buying such intimate trifles themselves. We had given mortal offense by the subtle suggestion behind the gift of these things.

In Tunis, and its surrounding Tunisia, sheiks were simply very charming but particularly mild imitation Frenchmen. All the thrill was in their beautiful costumes, and even those—with the inevitable jasmine behind a young man's ear—were rather womanish. These sheiks could write poems but they couldn't abduct a maiden.

Which brings us to sheiks of the West.

The first fire-breathing Western sheik I ever knew threatened to murder me if I wouldn't marry him, and then tried to do it with a

knife. Another wild sheik threatened the same thing, but had pity on me and took poison himself, before my eyes. It was real poison too, and he would quite honestly have died if a very, very unromantic thing hadn't been done by a doctor called in haste. Another was going to throw me out of a window and I trust would have done so if some one hadn't come in just then who was bigger than he was.

But these, two of them European, paled in comparison with a beauteous cowboy of a Western state. I had joked him about being a "toy cowboy," he was so perfect and so neat. He said he would show me if he was a toy. Would I dare stand still while he on his pinto came galloping at full tilt from a distance, roped me round the waist as he approached, and showed how he could stop dead without dragging me an inch?

I put on the look of not turning a hair and said of course I would. He rode out of sight. Suddenly he and his pinto appeared on the horizon. I felt the wind of his rushing approach; I heard the wild gallop of hoofs such as no Arab stallion shod with fire ever made in poem or prose. Then the lariat safely embraced my waist, and horse and man had stopped dead without making me even stagger or gasp. Oh, no, he was no toy cowboy! He was a real live sheik!

Then there was a man in California who was going to take me to a movie in his new car. But it was an alluring moonlight night, and he didn't take me to the movie. We shot past it and past everything except beach and surf. In the end he was terribly sheiklike; but the truth of a Western sheik is that at heart he is generally a gentleman. This one was.

Sheiks of the Western world, not having much desert handy, often do their best—or rather worst—sheik acts on shipboard. Never shall I forget a night in war time when I was on an Italian ship with seven first-class passengers, including four officers going home.

One of the four officers was a sheik, a very handsome and fascinating sheik. One couldn't help admiring him just a little, and he pretended not to presume on friendship. He asked me if he should come to my cabin door now and then to give me the latest news—we were in the submarine zone. I forgot that he was a sheik and eagerly said yes.

I sat dressed as I had been for dinner, with the door open, reading. The sheik came to the doorway. I stood up to greet him when he out-Arabed all the Arabs even of feminine fiction. I was swept off my feet, the door shut, and—but I knew a little jiu-jitsu. He didn't.

Many further instances could I give of other sheiks in East and West, but all, all in favor of the latter, even counting Moors, who are far more daring than their brother Arabs.

Girls, women, look towards the setting, not the rising sun; for sheiks—gorgeous, terrible, desperate, brutal, tender, utterly primitive! They are in your own home town. They are in your village. Perhaps, if you are married, they are in your own house, unappreciated.

You Look Just Like—by Bella Cohen (Continued from page 97)

were dining in a Russian restaurant on Kurfürsten-Damm, in Berlin. The *zakouska* proved to be fresh, the wine excellent. By the time the Gipsies of the chorus ascended the platform to sing their songs, we were very gay.

They took their seats and dropped their hands in their laps, shoulders sloping, eyes thoughtful. Not one of them was a genuine Gipsy, we agreed. And then my eyes were drawn to a flat-faced girl who wore no kerchief, whose shawl was a worn green-blue. She was a Gipsy.

The fat leader in a gold-embroidered velvet waistcoat took his place below the platform and began to strum out the accompaniment on his guitar. The girl with the green-blue shawl

—my Gipsy as I called her—began to sing, eyes shut. She had a hard contralto that struck at your heart like a satin-sheathed, blood-encrusted dagger. When she finished, she opened her eyes and caught my gaze on her. Her eyes widened with amazement.

Because her voice had stirred me strangely, I smiled and nodded my thanks. Instantly the eyes of the Gipsy lighted up and her face flushed from her neck to her forehead. At the end of the second song, the chorus filed back to their room, but my Gipsy came to me as if in a trance and looked down at me.

"Sit down," I begged. The Gipsy sat down. "What would you like to eat and drink?" I asked.

The Russian members of the party began to laugh. The grammatical construction of that invitation left much to be desired. The Gipsy did not laugh. The smile with which she had seated herself was wiped off her face. She jumped to her feet.

"*Vi ni Russkii*!" she asked in a choked voice. "No," I answered, in my pidgin Russian. "I am an American. But I have visited Russia."

The Gipsy looked at me hungrily, and then with a sudden sob ran to the dressing-room.

I looked from one to the other of the group at the table. What had I done to make her cry? My friends looked at me, just as astonished and, it seemed to me, strangely hostile.

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I was brought back to myself by the greasy voice of the Gipsy leader who, bowing and scraping, asked if he could explain and apologize for La Gitana. He took the chair the Gipsy had so suddenly vacated and said: "La Gitana—that is what I call her—thought you were Vera Marsovoaya. Madame, I could swear that you are the very image of Vera Marsovoaya."

"Who was she?" I asked.

"Marsovoaya was—is still, perhaps—a Gipsy with a voice of flowers. You heard La Gitana? She sings well, no? Yes, but her voice does not compare with that of Marsovoaya. The voice of La Gitana pulls at you only because it gives out the grief of La Gitana because she has lost Marsovoaya, with whom she grew up. But the voice of Marsovoaya picked you up and gave you wings—"

"What happened to her?" some one interrupted.

"She ran away with an officer in 'nineteen. But he grew tired and the last we heard he had left her, and she disappeared." He shrugged his shoulders. "And now I will tell you of La Gitana. She did not want to leave Moscow, but Marsovoaya was dearer to her even than Moscow and so she joined with us when we went out. Why? Only to look for Marsovoaya. She is certain she will find her. Perhaps. Stranger things have happened. Next week we go to Paris. Already we have been to Copenhagen, The Hague, Constantinople, Riga and Bucharest. And every day La Gitana goes out into the streets and looks for Marsovoaya. Perhaps in Paris she will find her. Everybody goes to Paris, no? And now, ladies and gentlemen, excuse!"

Yes, the Gipsies had already begun to file onto the platform I saw my Gipsy ascend with averted face. There was defeat and loneliness in every line of her body.

On the train from Brussels to Paris, in April two years ago, I was sitting in an unusually crowded first-class compartment trying to learn French from a conversation book. My system was to copy a phrase ten times, repeating it silently to myself.

I continued at my labors until I came to the section in the conversation book headed "Phrases in a Doctor's Office." I read,

"Doctor: 'My dear man, I shall have to cut your arm off.'"

"Young man: 'But, Doctor, you can't do that. I need it.'"

I burst into laughter. The picture of the young man and the doctor and the doomed arm was too much for me.

Sympathetically the others in the compartment smiled at me. A thin-lipped, oldish man with a pince-nez asked in crisp King's English what I was laughing at. I told him. A Belgian Jew who understood English translated what I had said to the rest. They laughed heartily, but the thin-lipped, oldish man did not laugh. He just stared at me like a malevolent fish, I thought. He seemed to disapprove of me.

A little self-conscious, I got up and went into the corridor. We were just coming to Chantilly, and the sight of the smooth, placid greenness endeared France to me forever.

"My wife and my two boys and I bicycle out here on Sundays," I heard suddenly.

I looked up in surprise. It was the oldish man. He was talking to me!

"Do you bicycle?" he demanded.

"No. No good at any sports," I explained.

"What do you like?"

"Reading, writing, pictures and music. Oh, yes, and walking."

"Pictures?" repeated the oldish man.

"Yes—mostly modern work."

"Such as—"

"Well, such as Renoir, Degas, Picasso, Pissarro, Monet."

"How would you like to see a private collection of these?"

"A private collection?" I repeated.

"Yes—it belongs to my brother and his wife. It is one of the best—one of the most valuable in the world. There are some precious Old Masters as well."

And this man I had compared to a malevolent fish!

We exchanged cards and Mr. D. told me that he was born in England but had lived in Paris for twenty years. And that he had never spoken to anyone on a train since he was twenty.

"And why did you speak to me?"

"Because—" The oldish man stopped. "I should rather not tell you."

A week later I received a note from Mr. D. inviting me to have tea with himself and his brother and his wife at their house.

That afternoon I remember as ivory and dull gold—pictures, people, the whole atmosphere of the house near the Bois de Boulogne was ivory and dull gold. It was magnificent, but despite the sun that poured into the gallery, a cold place. Mr. D., very correct in swallow-tail and striped gray trousers and spats, met me at the door. He stared at me in a way that reminded me again of the malevolent fish.

In the drawing-room, Mr. D. introduced me to his brother and his wife. His brother seemed to be about sixty, with a bushy gray beard and beautiful hands, one of which he cupped to his ear from time to time, as he was quite deaf. His wife, who looked amazingly like her husband in a feminine mold, greeted me in a South American, tongue-tied English. I was conscious of her eyes, black and piercing.

I decided to bring my visit to an abrupt end. Mr. D. asked me where I was going and I told him. He said he was going in the same direction. Could he accompany me?

Out on the street, I turned to him. "Thank you for letting me come," I said.

"Thank you," he interrupted. "It was for a purely selfish reason that I invited you. It was not because of the gallery." I looked at him perplexedly. "Can you spare a few minutes?" he asked. We sat down at one of the tables of a little corner café.

"The reason I invited you was," began Mr. D. slowly, in that clipped English of his, "that I wanted my brother and his wife to see what they are putting out of their lives. Six years ago their daughter went on the stage—the French stage." Mr. D. paused darkly. "And the French stage is the vilest in the world. My brother and his wife then barred her from their home and refused ever to see her again. I am younger than my brother by several years and my views are broader than his. I argued for Lor—for my niece as eloquently as I could. "In order not to hear or see even a photo of her, before they look at newspapers and magazines the secretary every day goes through them and cuts out any mention or reproduction of her."

"Then she is famous!" I interjected.

Mr. D. nodded morosely. "Yes," he said, "as a music-hall favorite can be famous. You don't know how rotten the French stage is, I can see that."

No, I didn't, I admitted, while back of my mind was the question: What had I to do with all this?

Mr. D. continued: "You are my niece's double. That is why I spoke to you on the train. I conceived a plan there and then as we rode through Chantilly that I could get my brother and his wife to be reconciled to their daughter if they could see you, and seeing you, realize the loss they are sustaining by refusing to acknowledge their daughter." He sighed abruptly. "Ah, what is the use! The only impulsive thing I ever did in my life has not succeeded. They are determined to forget her."

These episodes have stretched over a period of more than three years. In between and before that there were many encounters of a more usual kind and not so colorful or amusing—or agreeable. I have "looked like" Pola Negri, Nazimova, Fania Marinoff and, according to one of my friends, "like the little girl in vodvil who took tumbles," whose name she couldn't remember.

Mistaken for one of these platinum set women, I wonder what I would do.

But would I?

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The Umkuna Tree

(Continued from page 49)

it a music he had never known before. "Cathreen—my lovely Cathreen—my dark Cathreen—the sweetest, dearest thing in Africa—in the world—my Cathreen!" Whispering in the darkness like that long-ago boy who did not want to go back to the bloody war, urging, pleading: "I have been under a spell, Cathreen, but it's broken now. Don't ask me about it. I can't tell you. Some day perhaps, when we're both old; but not now. Don't ask. There are some things a man can't . . . But it's prevented me from seeing you clearly—your dearness, your loveliness—dimmed my memories of over there, those precious times during the war . . . you know—you 'member, Cath?"

Yes, she remembered, and that in their closest hours he had always said "member" and "Cath." Her fingers passed through his hair, smoothing it, giving response.

"But it's gone now—that spell—that spell. You've broken it, dispersed it as if it never was. Swept it away, never to return. Do you understand, my Cath?"

Yes—she understood. And she was both too humble and too proud to ask more. There was something of the great lover in Cathreen. She could give without conditioning to receive; she understood what love really means—not proud clamoring at portals for triumphant entry, but bending the head low and accepting. Not "two souls in a meadow picking flowers," but sacrifice, renouncement, forgiveness. It was enough to have her lover there, her own man, pleading for that forgiveness, urging, pressing to be taken back again into her arms and into her life. Enough to feel his mouth, in the darkness, seeking hers. Content!

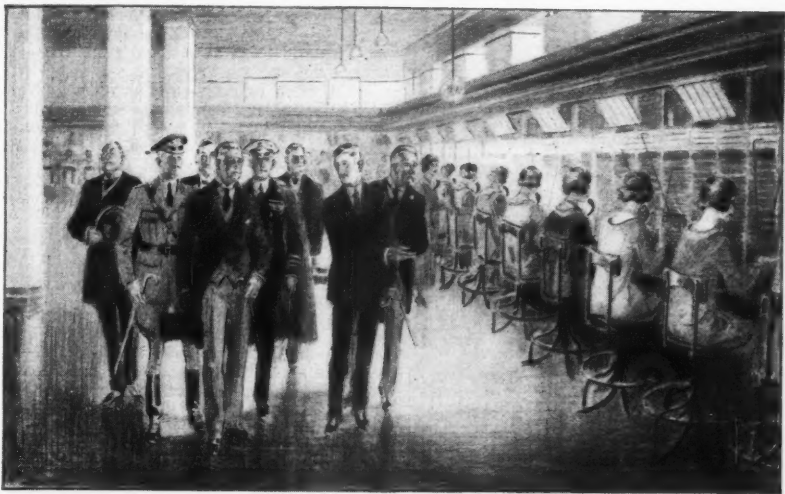
The heat had been extraordinary all day, and a strange heavy booming had added itself to the atmospheric oppression, reminding Cathreen vaguely of a day during the war when she passed through Amiens and heard the guns from afar. Perhaps it was distant thunder. Certainly rain could not be far off. Kit had said it must come soon now.

Reclining in a long chair for her afternoon siesta, she was not sleeping, just resting in the darkened sitting-room; day-dreaming with her eyes closed; putting in time until the blare of the motor horn should announce that Kit had arrived at the other side of the drift, and within five minutes would be in her arms. It was mail day and he had gone in to get the letters and English papers. She did not expect him back much before five. A runic rhyme danced dreamily across her brain:

Time, you old Gipsy man,
Will you not stay?
Put up your caravan
Just for a day.

How often in the last two days had she uttered those words, like a prayer! And the old Gipsy man had heeded and set up his caravan while she and Kit tasted love in the wilds. At last she knew how happy she could be at Spitzkoppies. For two flawless days and nights Africa's sunsets and dawns, sun, moon and stars had been for them, and them alone; and Africa's solitudes more satisfying than all that cities held.

The farm put on a new face, and the veld new colors; they planned new plans for life and the future, and all the big and little things that they would do. Spitzkoppies was going to be the loveliest farm in Rhodesia, and the most prosperous. Kit would start his book on Rhodesian birds, the first of a series. The second was to be called "Niggers"; no man in the country knew them better than he—their language, customs and funny little ways. But the bird book must come first, he said, because it was his Gloriana to Cathreen; his Amen; the first leaf of an ultimate wreath to lay at her feet. Her share in it was to be the setting to music of the bird calls, those elusive, rapturous sounds which Kit held secure in his brain.



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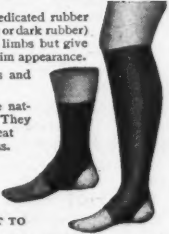
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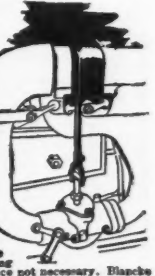
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By LETITIA HADLEY

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The marvelous thing was that during those wonderful days no one from outside came near the farm. It was as though Time the old Gipsy man had specially arranged with Fate the old witch to keep away intruders. Nor friend nor foe, nor bore nor beggar disturbed them, and gleefully they hugged to themselves the conviction that Binnie had at last taken offense. For once they had their home to themselves.

"Time, you old Gipsy man . . . will you not stay?"

But now, dreaming in her chair, she wished time to fly instead, so that Kit might return the sooner. Every moment apart was grudging. How long before she could expect him? She opened her eyes to look at the clock; and they stayed open, staring in strong surprise. The man standing in the doorway, lounging against it with a kind of idle grace, must have come there with the stealthy padded step of a jungle creature.

He was a dark man. Tall. Dressed in riding breeches, but coatless and hatless. She had never seen him in her life before. Nevertheless, by the bitter melancholy of his mouth, and those features burnt, twisted and disfigured by scars, she knew at once that she must be looking at Charles Venner. A sense of strange apprehension stirred in her, but quickly she rose and, with gentle courtesy, put out her hand.

"How do you do?"

He made no reply. Nor any attempt to take her hand. It fell back to her side in the moment's silence that followed, while slowly her astonishment turned to trepidation, realizing the dark hostility of his eyes. At last she asked, abruptly:

"What do you want?"

"Ah! That's more like it!" he answered at once. His voice was a jungle voice too, low but fierce and harsh. "That's more to the point than polite inquiries about my health, and you shall have your answer: I want your husband."

"Why? What for?" Outwardly she remained calm, but the brutality and malignance of his answer appalled her. To add to her horror, she perceived his right hand resting on the butt of a revolver that stuck out of his breeches pocket. His voice became so soft that it scarcely reached her.

"To shoot him like a dog," he said. "I find he has done me the honor of fathering my wife's child."

"I don't believe it," the words sprang instinctively from Cathreen's lips, and from her pride, that lay in the dust. For at his terrible words there arose before her a sudden vision of little Alannah, golden and blue-eyed. Whose eyes were those she had? Not those pools of gold that were her mother's—not this man's—hot, almost black, tormented.

"I don't believe it!"

"Don't you? Well, I happen to know. And as my knowledge came through you, in a way, you shall know too. I heard that you wanted the name of the big boundary tree, and I went to have a look at it, taking a boy of mine who knows a few things. He told me the name—the *umkuna tree*—but when I went to write it down I found I hadn't got my note-book. Then I saw a bit of paper caught in a bush, and picked it up to use. It was a scrap of torn letter—just a few words on it—but written with the violet ink my wife always uses, and in her writing. What do you think they were?"

"I don't want to know—they don't concern me."

"Oh, but they do! Listen!" Then he repeated slowly, like a lesson learned, "*Alannah—our sweet baby—the child of our secret love—it infuriates me to see Chas fondling her. If I could only get away from him—just you and me and . . .*" That was all. But quite enough for a fond father and husband, what?"

He laughed. Cathreen was horrified at the sound.

"It could mean nothing," she urged. "Women put down the silliest things on paper. She was making up a story perhaps—or trying

to write a play. Besides, what has it to do with Kit?"

"You don't suppose I left it at that? I went home and faced her suddenly with the paper. That was enough. Her face told me. The rest I got out of her." His face became hideous. "I twisted her wrists," he said softly, "I wrung her thumbs—I struck her blow after blow—her beautiful treacherous eyes, her lovely lying mouth—blow after blow. At last she gave me the name of her lover—your husband's name."

Cathreen blanched. Her soul shook within her at the quiet ferocity of the man, and at these words which dealt a mortal blow at her very life. Nevertheless, doggedly, her pride in the love that was stronger than herself made its act of faith.

"I don't believe it," she repeated in a ringing voice.

Charles Venner's mouth opened in a mad loud laugh.

"Your lover too, eh?" he sneered. "He is various, and fortunate in his amours. But not for very much longer will he walk the earth thieving—and chucking letters about! The swine—couldn't even destroy the evidence of a woman's shame—just let it kick about the veld, to be read by any . . . Gurr!" he made a noise like a savage beast. "Where is he?"

"My husband, as you can see, is not here," said Cathreen coldly and clearly. "If he were he would answer for himself. He is not the kind that fights his battles through a woman."

He caught the taunt and flung one furiously back. "Only the kind that steals another man's woman!"

A deep red color invaded Cathreen's pallor. "You say that very valiantly," she retorted stingingly, "as you have said, and apparently done, many valiant and chivalrous things today. But would it not be more courageous to come back when my husband is here, and say it to his face?"

"You mean give you time to warn him?" said Venner dryly. "No; I shall take good care you don't do that. My intention is to shoot him down before he is aware."

"You think that the valiant thing to do too?" she sneered. "The brave man's way?"

"It's too good for him. I only wish I could do something worse than kill him."

She shuddered inwardly, her whole being shaken with a turmoil of fear that Kit might come in and be shot down without a dog's chance. But outwardly she managed to preserve her self-possession, looking at him with dominating eyes, willing him to go, praying to God for time, for opportunity to send and warn Kit on the road. Meanwhile the important thing was to lie convincingly.

"He won't be back today," she said with steady eyes. "He went to town this morning and will not return until tomorrow."

His answer was startling, even in the midst of chaos.

"He certainly won't, if he has gone to town, for the river is up and no living soul could cross it tonight."

She felt literally sick with relief. Venner gazed at her fixedly.

"I have got to satisfy myself," he muttered, "that he's nowhere about the farm—and you just waiting to send to warn him."

"Satisfy yourself how and where you please. But be good enough to leave me now."

Relief at Kit's temporary reprieve from the vengeance of this madman was succeeded in her by an intense heaviness of spirit, a longing to be alone, with no eye to watch her being torn and pierced by this terrible grief—this calamity that had overtaken her new-found happiness. When Venner, as suddenly as he had come, disappeared from the doorway, she collapsed into a chair dazed, almost fainting, from the most horrible ordeal of her life.

But not for long. Soon the remembrance of Kit's danger surged up again, thrusting itself like a lance through the maze of her pain. She must at once make some move to warn him. But the full river! Perhaps even now he was waiting on the other side; though surely she

would have heard the horn. Suppose it were possible for some one to swim across with a letter.

Dansa she believed would go. Hurrying outside she found to her astonishment that a great change had come over the face of the day. Black clouds leaned low in the sky, and rain was falling, misty, chilling rain, presenting an Africa she knew not, wrapped in gray veils. Every living thing had disappeared under cover.

She decided to call no one until she had reconnoitred, found out if Venner was still about, inspected the river for herself. Hastily pulling on a waterproof, she slipped out through the gray rain, across the grounds and down the road. Still not a soul in sight, and the uncanny stillness broken only by that dull booming, which now grew louder and nearer. Then, as she reached a point where the road dipped to the drift, she understood. The noise came from the river.

It was the thunder of Ngamo. She could scarcely believe her eyes. The drift no longer existed. Where this morning the car had passed smoothly over the dry river course there rushed now a raging, roaring torrent of dirty yellow water. Rain hundreds of miles away must have brought this racing flood, for there had been nothing locally to justify it; though now she noticed it was beginning to pelt down more heavily. Her drenched hat hung over her eyes, and little rivulets streamed down her mackintosh.

A faint blaring sound penetrating the roar of water, she looked over and saw the car standing there, with Kit beside it gesticulating. He was shouting too, she realized, his hands to his mouth. She caught a far-off echo. It sounded like "All right!" Then again, after an interval, "Go home! . . . Bogey Mine . . . tomorrow."

It dawned on her that he meant she was to go home; he would go to the Bogey Mine, three miles back, and try the river tomorrow. Yes, that must be what he said, for now he was turning back to the car again. She realized she must make an effort now to warn him, and putting her hands to her mouth she used all her strength to shriek: "Don't come! Wait for messenger!" But she saw that he had not heard a sound. She made another wild effort. "Danger!" she screamed. "Doctor Venner wants to kill you!"

Not a word reached him. He looked casually downstream. Then he made a sweeping gesture towards the house, as if ordering her to return. They could scarcely see each other now through the heavy rain, but she could just distinguish his movements as he got into the car again and backed it away. She turned towards home, reaching it like a drowned woman, her heart full of despair.


As soon as she got in she called for Pansy, who being mission-taught spoke English after a fashion, and acted as interpreter between Cathreen and the boys.

But Jalus informed her by gesture that Pansy had gone home.

At any rate she would be back first thing in the morning, and Cathreen could then set her to find out which of the boys would risk crossing with a letter for Kit. All that could be done tonight was the composing of the letter. As soon as she had changed from her wet clothes she sat down to that task.

She began, "Dear Kit—this is what happened this afternoon," then set down the incident, giving word for word what Venner had said, with no single comment of her own, but at the end adding: "I came to the river to try to warn you, but you could not hear. For God's sake do not come here until you are armed or he has been disarmed. Cathreen." Having folded it and put it into an envelop, she took it out again and wrote under her name:

"I love you." And, in writing that, she knew she was making a declaration to herself as well as to Kit that nothing Charles Venner had said was going to come between her and her love. That



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Kit loved her too, whatever had happened during the last three years, she was certain, and the past must take care of itself. That fact about little Alannah, if it were true, was terrible, torturing; but in spite of it she ranged herself at Kit's side, and let come what might, she would stand there unswervingly.

Having sealed her letter she put it away and tried, not very successfully, to eat some food; for it was now eight o'clock and Jalus had brought in dinner.

At half past ten the whole farm, except for the sitting-room lights, was in absolute blackness. The boys had scuttled off to the compound. With a sensation of being utterly cut off from the world, Cathreen yet felt curiously free of nervousness. Anxiety for Kit absorbed her to the exclusion of any other thought about herself. What was to happen when he and Venner met? Would there be killing? Did Venner, in fact, really contemplate a cold-blooded murder? Yes—remembering that man's eyes she could not doubt it. He wanted revenge, and nothing else would satisfy him. If only he would take her life instead of Kit's—how gladly she would offer it! But supposing Kit, prepared by her letter, should meet and shoot Venner instead—"in self-defense"? That too was horrible to contemplate—Kit piling one wrong on another.

Even if nothing at all happened, if Venner made up his mind to do nothing—perhaps forgive his wife, whom no doubt he loved, and keep in his life the little child he adored—even then, what a terrible situation for all of them, living there cheek by jowl with one another!

Oh, what a desperate thing was life! thought Cathreen, sitting there heavy with foreboding. What despair and disenchantment it held for those who began with simple faith in love, in honor, in constancy! How could men break these beautiful things so carelessly, so ruthlessly? And who could think it of Kit—with his blue eyes, his personal cleanness, his open friendly smile, his courage and gaiety?

Ah! No need to guess now what spell he had confessed to. The spell of Sheila Venner and the flesh! A spell woven of invisible threads lighter than breath and stronger than chains; strong enough to draw him from the sweeter, cleaner love that belonged to Cathreen.

Three years ago it must have begun. He had met her first on the boat coming out. Perhaps it began there. Kit with his splendid vitality and looks, and that lovely golden woman—"having such a thin time of it." Then, after, with the farms lying side by side, how easy stolen meetings would be, how the veld would lend its shade and its secrecy to lovers.

At last she could bear these reflections no longer. It would be better to go and pray against them, she thought, and for an issue from this dark rendezvous with Fate to which four people approached; and, extinguishing the lamps, she went out into the long passage, doorless, which led to her bedroom. She was almost swept off her feet by the rain-laden gale that rushed through, but once in, with curtains drawn, candles lighted and the storm shut out, she felt calmer. After praying for a long while, she was able to undress and prepare for bed.

After she was in bed and the lights out, it began to worry her a little to remember that her door remained unlocked. Kit had never returned the key. Impossible to account for the feeling of urgency that at last decided her to get up and at least push a piece of furniture against it.

Reaching out her hand for the matches, she struck one. And while she was leaning on her elbow lighting the candle, her overstrained mind seemed to sense that something in the room had changed; her ears distinguished some noise differing from the unceasing rattle of the rain on the roof. Then, as the candle threw up its illuminating beam, she saw to her horror that she was right. The sound had been made by the opening of the door, and once more Charles Venner, with his air of idle grace, lounged in the doorway.

Once more they gazed silently at each other;

but this time there was new menace in the eyes of the man, a fresh terror in the breast of the woman. She opened her lips to ask, as she thought in a loud voice, the same question she had asked in the morning—"What do you want?" But her voice was no more than a whisper, and it is doubtful if he heard her, or could have done so through the roar of the rain. He could only see the movement of her lips, and her eyes that were the frightened eyes of a pale, lovely child as she sat there in her white nightgown, with dark hair streaming about her shoulders—a sight to bring pity into the heart of a brute.

But was there any pity in the heart of that betrayed, unhappy man? It seemed not. Only a great and terrible melancholy. In that moment which was like a year, Cathreen had time to realize that here was a great love ruined.

Pity and fear strove together in Cathreen while she strained her ears to catch from his lips the words she knew to be of some terrible import to her. He too seemed determined she should hear, for he moved nearer shouting, and perhaps an instant's lull came in the storm, for the significance of the message reached her at last. She heard certain words quite clearly:

"Second thought . . . sweeter revenge to take on Valmond . . . worse than death to him . . . his pride . . . suffer more than mere killing . . ."

Suddenly he straightened himself and leaped across. She was aware of a cloth of some kind that he held in his hand being slammed over her face, a cloth damp and heavy with the sweet, sickening odor of chloroform. Strong hands pressed it upon her mouth and nostrils and pushed her down, down, down into a deep pit.

Then darkness . . . unconsciousness.

When she awakened dawn was in the room, and more than dawn; piercing the curtains were the first lovely rays of that mild and yellow sunlight which often follows upon a night of storm, seeming to bless and grace the chastened earth. Outside, a thousand flowers joyfully lifting their heads once more, and every leaf on tree and bush glistening as if in gratitude for drink after long drought. Inside, a woman with death in her heart.

At first awakening she did not realize, could not remember; only a sense of foreboding filled her. Her head ached throbbingly, and she felt a deadly nausea that was unaccountable. The kind of nausea that comes after what? . . . unconsciousness caused by a drug.

Ah! at once she remembered all. The hideousness of what had happened came sweeping over her, and cowering down beneath the clothes, she gave way to long shuddering sobs. The beauty of morning was not for her any more. Never again could she love sunlight and the purity of flowers. It made it no less terrible that she knew nothing of what had taken place after that swift descent of hers into blackness. Only God and that madman Charles Venner knew that. She herself would never know; but his sinister words were bitten into her brain . . . and on the pillow beside her, where Kit's head had lain but yesterday, there was the indent of a head.

Familiar morning sounds obtruded themselves. They started off Cathreen's long shudders again, but not with fear. Kit's safety was now assured. She need no longer worry about that; he would not be shot. The bill had been paid—by Cathreen herself. Yesterday she had wished to pay it—with her life instead of Kit's. But Charles Venner had extorted payment in other kind, the intention being to make Kit suffer a worse injury than death.

Probably, when Kit knew, he would go seeking Venner to kill. And after that what? Death for himself as well as Venner? A bloody holocaust from which she and Sheila alone survived to face the wretched years. That was what must surely happen if she told Kit, as Venner, no doubt, relied on her doing.

Or would the sheer fact that he had got even with Kit satisfy his vengeance?—that, and the knowledge that she at least knew him to be avenged. She did not know, could not think; shame and sorrow dazed her; she could not see clearly. Only one thing she realized—that, with the river still full, she would at least have a day to recover reason in, and come to some decision.

The river in fact took five days to go down sufficiently for Kit to swim across. And all that time Cathreen agonized alone with her problem. And still, right up to the moment when Kit, stepping out from his swim, kissed her with dripping lips, she did not know what she was going to do about the future. Then, quite simply and clearly, it came to her that she was to do nothing. She must keep silence on that fearful happening, leave the ultimate solution in the strong hands of God. But Kit almost instantly sensed something different about her.

"What have you been doing with yourself, Cath?" he asked as soon as they got indoors and he could take her in his arms. He held her shoulders and looked into the eyes almost level with his. "You're changed."

That was a hard scrutiny to bear, and a hard saying to meet; but she found strength to ask tenderly, "How am I changed? I love you still."

He thought that answer strange too, yet could not find the fault in it, or lay his finger on what was different about her. Was it in her eyes? Had they grown larger, deeper? Were there shadows in them he had never noticed before? Or was it her mouth—that sweet full lower lip that he loved, so fresh and ardent, did it take a graver, sadder curve than he remembered? Did her little proud head always have that slight droop on its long throat? Or were these things just fancies, creations of his love-fired brain? Fantasies born of five days' intolerable separation?

Often in the weeks to come she would find his gaze fixed wonderingly, inquiringly on her. But she managed to present to him and to life a smiling serenity hard to acquire, but in which he at least found great happiness.

Only with a serene woman would it have been possible to stand the next few weeks of daily losses, accidents and irritations incidental to the heavy rains. For the worst wet season Rhodesia had known for years was now well launched, and, on account of having no bridge over the river, they became practically cut off from the rest of the world.

Water everywhere. Great lakes of it lying on the meale lands with wild duck swimming gaily. The river burst its banks one night and flowed all over the low ground, drowning a number of thoroughbred calves, washing away a kiln containing 20,000 bricks, and destroying most of the young crops. Anything that might have been left was carefully cleaned up by a couple of hippos brought down by the floods from far northern reaches.

Binnie Ronalds steadfastly kept away, but whether because still sulky or because calamity had also visited Kingston was not quite clear, until Kit rode over one day to see, as a sort of neighborly duty, and came back reporting, but not with the grief he should have shown, that Binnie's £500 bull had disappeared into the 'Ngamo, to be seen no more of mortal eye.

"He seems somewhat narky about it," grinned Kit. "Much annoyed too because the hippo gave him a friendly call after they left us and picnicked among his meales. Finally his house sat down on him in that storm three nights ago, and he now resides in a hut until such time as he can make bricks. I told him he could come over here for a meal or a bed any time, but I fancy he is still sulking over—your know."

Of the owners of Larkdale they saw neither sign nor signal, at which Cathreen at least felt no surprise; but she often wondered fearfully when it must come, and where, that next meeting. Kit treated it as a perfectly natural thing that they should see and hear nothing of the Venners. Without Cathreen introducing

It was *Miles* between tubs

THEY were motoring and frequently rooms with a bath were as scarce as hens' teeth.

One evening she came across a magazine advertisement that suggested an unusual use for Listerine, the safe antiseptic.

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* * *

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One day, you're going to get Tangee. . . The next you're going to be a bit more lovely, younger. . .

Tangee Lipstick, \$1. Tangee Rouge Compact, \$.75. Tangee Creme Rouge (excellent for dry skins, \$1.)



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the subject, he remarked one day that it was always so in the wet season, furthermore stating casually that he had only seen Venner three times since they settled there, and always when out shooting in the forest.

"Tumbled across each other quite by accident, but if I'd done it on purpose, he could not have looked more savage." Cathreen felt an ebbing of blood from her heart and from her face, but Kit, noticing nothing, went on easily, "Good thing you and she didn't hit it, or she might often have been over here, and there'd have been more cause for trouble."

Cathreen rose abruptly. "Let's get to work, Kit," she said in a low voice.

There were moments when she sat in judgment on him, and this was one of them. Was he so thoroughly callous that the fate of that unhappy woman no longer even interested him? Were men really like that? and being like that, could women continue to love them? Could she continue to love Kit? She would look at him with hard eyes when such reflections came, and, even though busy at some occupation or another or sitting so that he could not see her eyes, he would stir uneasily as if instinct warned him of some danger to his well-being.

But work was a saving grace. They were busy on the bird book, and he little knew what safety to his happiness, what refuge for her tortured mind lay in that. It filled the days with interest and shut out carking care. Time flew by, and the wettest days held no boredom. While storms raged without they sat snug within, an open wood fire brightening and scenting the room, the typewriter clicking briskly, or Cathreen at the piano trying to catch and set down in music the songs and calls of the birds that Kit could whistle so easily.

It was fascinating work, and she flung herself eagerly into it to an extent that, almost, sometimes she forgot but never quite, that haunting horror of hers.

Among other things they had to contend with about this time was an outbreak among the boys, something of an epidemic like flu. Undoubtedly the heavy rains had much to do with this. Then no sooner was this trouble tided over when the Bogey Mine had to be put in quarantine for two cases of smallpox, and another scare came to full bloom. Native commissioners dashed about the country, vaccinating in large batches, and tubes of vaccine were also distributed to employers.

Either vaccinating or the marking of boys' tickets was going forward in the yard one morning, and Cathreen was alone in the front stoop, when she found herself suddenly walked in upon by Binnie Ronalds. He had startling tidings to impart.

"What do you think?" He wore the brisk air of newsbringer to the wilds. "The Venners have cleared out and gone down country!"

Cathreen was so surprised she could say nothing, and Binnie, full of himself, continued: "It appears that Sheila has been very seedy the last few weeks—had an accident to one of her teeth, and constant neuralgia ever since. Venner declares she can get better treatment in Durban, and is taking her down. They rushed in last night and caught the mail train at six this morning."

Cathreen had no comment to make. The news was of course of the most intense import to her, though she did not betray it—except perhaps by her silence, for suddenly she realized that Binnie was looking at her with something more than casual interest in his glance.

Cathreen's heart bounded. Could he possibly know anything? The thought made her rush into speech.

"Did you see them—to say good-by?"

"Yes—just by luck I was in town yesterday, and when I heard they were at the hotel for the night I went over of course—had a sort of in-the-gloaming interview on the balcony outside their rooms. You know what Venner is, hiding as usual, and she not very keen either

on being seen, on account of the accident to her tooth—though it doesn't really show much."

He paused and looked about the room for Kit's cigarettes. When Cathreen had indicated them and he had lighted one he went on:

"Venner asked me to fix up a few matters for him at the farm. He's left a rotter of a Dutchman called Bomplatz in charge, but he wants me to give an eye to the place until—" He paused again and, without looking at Cathreen, said carelessly, too carelessly, "I fancy from one or two things Venner let drop, that they won't be returning." He continued looking away into the garden, but suddenly as an afterthought added, "But perhaps I've no right to say that, so just forget it, will you, Mrs. Valmond?"

Yes, Binnie Ronalds knew or suspected something. She was certain of that. He had come over specially to inform her that the Venners were going away never to return. It was for her personal relief, that piece of information, though he had hidden it away till last under light gossip.

But why? And what could he know? Not the worst? No. No one could possibly know that but Charles Venner and herself—of that she was certain too. What Binnie knew must be Venner's grief against Kit. About little Alannah! He had found that out somehow. Or perhaps had known it all along. Men were curiously loyal to one another in affairs about women. Knew things about each other, and kept them secret, as women never would.

Here Kit entered, and the news had to be repeated.

He seemed genuinely surprised.

"Must have made up their minds in a deuce of a hurry!" he commented with a wide stare. "And left that fellow Bomplatz in charge, have they? He'll soon mess things up for them. A good nigger is better any day than a low Dutchman."

"That's what I told Venner," said Binnie idly, "but you know how pig-headed he is. He'll find it out for himself if he's fool enough to leave Bomplatz there long. However, that's his picnic."

Not a word to Kit about the probable non-return of the Venners! It must be as Cathreen surmised—that piece of information was for her alone. Kit's peace of mind was of no importance to Binnie ("that was Kit's picnic"), but he had always been friendly to Cathreen, she recognized, and, having become aware that she knew about Alannah, he was there to let her know that in future the presence of that grief would be removed from her door. These were the things she read into Binnie Ronalds's news and reservations, and while he and Kit sat talking in the old friendly manner, she was thinking of those two tragic ones in the train fleeing south.

Venner had at least acted kindly in this. He might have forced Kit to go—Kit, the original sinner, the cause of all the trouble. Instead he had left the field clear, had done nothing to Kit that Kit knew of, but just left the field to him. There was grace in the act, Cathreen acknowledged, of the man who had acted so basely, so shamefully to her. Perhaps there was to be a fresh beginning for them all.

Then, one day when all the surface of life looked smooth and quiet, when the blue sky promised peace—even in that; when the rain had apparently stopped raining for good and under the gay sunshine the garden sang with color and echoed with the rejoicing of birds—realization came to her that she was going to have a child. And all the wonder of having at last a child of her own was slimed over by a dreadful memory and a dreadful fear—that perhaps the child was not Kit's. Perhaps Charles Venner's revenge was to be more complete than even he imagined.

She had sensed this further tragedy creeping upon her, whispering at her ear in sleep, and ignored it for nearly three months; just that time now since Charles Venner's dark shadow flung itself across the sunshine of her life. But

she had been unable to believe, had refused to contemplate so hideous a contingency. After all, she herself was innocent of wrong in this matter. Others had done the wrong, and she had been the victim. But where was the sweet justice of God if still further terrible judgment must be wreaked on her?

But now at last she knew it was too late for any further doubt. A child would be born to her. There was more to endure. She had but touched pain's outer fringes. She was to know its inmost places.

She sat in the tropical garden wondering what she should do. Kit had got up at break of day and, breakfasting alone, set out for a distant part of the farm which had to be freshly surveyed and fenced; but she expected him back now at any moment.

All around her the jacarandas were in bloom, slender trees with fern-like leaves and flowers of a tender blue like wisteria. She thought of how she could have wished to fill the next six months of her life with nothing but the beauty of trees; but of what those six months must now be—filled with torture and doubts. For until her child was born, until she looked into its eyes she would never know, never be certain.

She thought of Kit's clean strong beauty and blue eyes, then of a dark, hate-tortured face—of a purple eyelid—the family birthmark that people rejoiced had not been passed on to little Alannah! She thought of Topsy Teviot: "A ghastly country . . . ghastly things happen in it!"

She thought, sitting there in the tropical garden, that she must go mad.

Kit was coming down the long avenue towards her, walking buoyantly as though his feet had wings. He waved his hand; he was calling out something to her. As soon as he got near enough she could hear him saying: "Cath, I want to tell you something—something I forgot. At least I didn't remember until I was six miles from home; then it came back to me like a flash. Move over!" he said and sat down beside her on the stone. "It was a dream, Cath. A dream I had last night."

He put an arm round her, pressing her close to his side, kissed her ear, then said very low and tenderly into it, "I dreamt we had a baby, Cath—you and me—a son."

He was laughing softly; she could not see his eyes, but she knew by the sound that there was red in them, that suffused look of blood which is the nearest some men get to tears.

"My Lord, Cathreen—there's nothing left in England for him to inherit. No old hall—no family acres. Nothing but this place that we have loved together, and will make together. And me. I want a son to inherit me. Not that I'm worth it. I know I'm not. I've nothing to pass on, except vitality, and a love of nature—and a love of truth. But I must pass it on. And then you, my darling—my lovely dark one—my Cathreen. You must be passed on."

She sat with her cheek to his, staring before her into the sunlight. She thought: I love him so much that I would divide up my body into a hundred pieces to give him the son he desires, but I can't do his suffering for him. His hour is coming as well as mine. Why should I have thought he would be allowed to escape?—the original sinner—the cause of tragedy to three, perhaps four others?

She thought: God is not mocked. At last she turned to her husband, kissed his eyes tenderly and rose to her feet. She said: "Kit—I will go and stay in that little convent at Bangwelo for a while. Reverend Mother said if ever I wanted to I might. I have got very far from God lately, and I think we need His help, you and I."

You may think you know how Cynthia Stockley's story is going to turn out—but there is as dramatic a surprise in store for you as there is for Cathreen—Next Month

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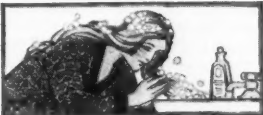
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I Am No Hero to My Sons (Continued from page 63)

Jeff and Clyde. But always we try to remember that our subjects have their own court, in which they sit in never-ending judgment upon us. How do we pass through the ordeal?

Heaven knows; we don't. Adults, whether parents or governesses or teachers, are phenomena of nature which children unquestioningly accept. Unworried by philosophies which rend the souls of adults, to them today is today and yesterday was not, and tomorrow shall not be. Living in the moment, with the moment thus becoming eternity, to them we adults are as the rocks, the trees, the sky, the sun. We are neither to be liked nor disliked, loved nor hated. We just are. We have reality, but it is a sketchy sort of reality, bearing slight relation to important things.

For we adults forget: food and drink and sleep are the realities to us, but not to children. Play, the words or deeds of their coevals—these are the true realities. And how can we, benevolent autocrats seated upon the throne of middle life, understand the vital things?

To us there is a yesterday; there will be a tomorrow. We order the child to cease his play, forgetting that what to us is a mere interlude is to him the rest of eternity. A minute, to us who have known so many million minutes, is nothing; to a child it is forever.

Give to a woman a woman's heart,
And a child's to a child.

O. Henry, who never grew up—he saw too clearly into the hearts of men and women to have attained maturity himself—summed it up in those lines.

But I have no child's heart to give to Jeff and Clyde. I try to go back into the dim and vasty past, but I do not find myself there. I am an adult. I have discovered philosophies that never burdened the sweet unconscious honesty of childhood. I have discovered obstacles intervening between me and my God. The road to Paradise is no longer short and straight and shining; it winds among the shadows and may not lead to Paradise after all.

Complexities have entered into that gentle relationship between life and myself that had no existence in the days of babyhood. A hundred hands, atavistic and primitive, pull me in a hundred different directions; mocking voices, stilled in childhood, hurl repeated questions in my puzzled ears.

Along that road to babyhood I do not find the child I was; I find only my present self. How, then, can I know Clyde and Jeff who do not know the boy I was?

I cannot understand my children, because the years have robbed me of comprehension. Knowledge of things I may have gained, but only a great bewilderment as to life itself. I ought to understand them, but I cannot. Then can I make them understand me?

But I am an artificial thing. I do not say what I think, not merely because of just resentments that may be aroused, but because I believe in compromise, the law of life as we adults live it. Children do not understand compromise; with clear vision they see truth, whereas we, spectacled with caution, see only expediency.

How can simplicity understand complexity? Understanding is ruled out between us; it can come from neither side to the other. I can compel neither love nor respect, but only obedience, and surely this is an unworthy summing up.

Unable to receive, then must I give; and what in the world have I to give them?

My own love; my own life if need be. A thousand sacrifices with only a pitiful hope of appreciation, of reward.

And then I laugh at my own self-pity. Why should I demand reward, why should I expect it? If I do for these dear boys of mine the things I want to do, what does it matter, in the long last if they appreciate me? Perhaps, in their very failure to feel gratitude, I shall

have gained a just appraisal of my own true worth.

What am I worth? Am I worth the powder to blow me up? Am I, in fact, an animal swollen with vanity, whose feeble strut across the page of life is so ridiculous that Time does not even waste a smile upon me?

A god for a brief year or so, a benevolent autocrat for another space, and afterwards . . . a memory.

Mercilessly appraised shall I be by these children of mine in the days to come. Actions which seem so unimportant to me now that I forget them immediately, will rest ineffaceably upon their memories. And believe me, you parents who read these lines, the moving finger of fate is no more inexorable than the remembering judgment of your children.

But, unfortunately, I cannot act a part forever. I can be no kinder than I really am, can evince no more honesty than I really possess, can seem no more generous than at heart I am.

Hopeless? Now we are at the root of the matter. I have nothing but scorn for parents who moan the lack of appreciation accorded them by their children. Is life a mathematical problem in which everything works out according to a formula readily perceived and apprehended by us? I think not.

Life is a magically mystic thing incomprehensible to those who endure it. Spiritual and material rewards and punishments are inextricably intermingled, accorded, apparently, without rhyme or reason.

Why, then, should our children, blind playthings of a terrific scheme, abide by rules which we have not eyes to read? Why should they appreciate any more—we pray—than they should condemn?

"My father was a gentleman. My father was generous. My father was kindly. My father was honest."

"Did you love that father?"

"Why, not particularly."

I can imagine such a conversation occurring between any honest adults.

Then why is it worth while striving to win affection, duty, respect, anything?

It isn't. Your artificialities cannot deceive them. Give up the battle now. If you win from them a kindly toleration you will have achieved greatly. And if, in addition, you can amuse them, you are rare among parents.

So here, returned from speculations which carry us too far into inquiries as to our very reasons for being, let us return to Jeff and Clyde.

Do they like me? I think so.

Do they respect me? I'm doubtful. I think they respect nothing, that respect has not yet entered into their calculations.

Are they dutiful? Outwardly, at least.

Do I amuse them?

Well, at my study door they're pounding now. I hear Clyde calling:

"Hey, boob, when are we going in swimming?"

Shocking, isn't it, their lack of respect? But then, as perhaps I have made clear, I have no overwhelming respect for myself.

But what am I giving them, to take the place of that cheap and unworthy semblance of respect which sternness might exact from them?

I shrug my shoulders. I don't know. Perhaps, you see, I have nothing worthy to give. If I have, they will discover it themselves. If I have not—well, I am not one of those who care to worship the false god of illusion.

Only this do I promise myself. From me they will learn no hypocrisy if I can help it. But then, the promise is absurd; probably I am tainted with hypocrisy myself, and they have already found it out. I shall teach them—what?

And back again we come to—nothing. For you see, Clyde affectionately calls me "boob." A boob is a fool. At times I think that Clyde is right, and in those times I almost

achieve wisdom. And what can a fool give to children?

Their mother gives them manners; morality—not its churchly makeshift, but the honest-to-God thing—is either in them or it is not. There remains to me only to offer them companionship.

And oh, my little boys, sometime when you are adults, I hope that the memory of my companionship will be sweet enough for you to want to give me some of yours. And if that wish of mine be granted, and a genuine friendly feeling inspires you to play a round of golf with your old dad, then will I, in my muddled way, have proved to be a successful father.

All right, Stupid, your Boob Dad is coming.

The Red Lamp

(Continued from page 89)

reasons are sound. Cameron's coming might result in unpleasant press publicity for us, and more than that, puts me where I do not intend to be placed, among the believers in spiritism.

He accepted that decision today, however, without comment. But shortly after he asked Edith for the letter from Evanston, and sat thinking over it for some time.

"Of course, with a little imagination," he said, "you might figure that these people were somehow let in on what happened here last year. But why Evanston?" And after a pause, following a train of thought:

"Of course I suppose, if you grant a spirit world, you have to grant that where time and space do not exist and only vibration counts—whatever that may mean—you could tune in Evanston as well as—well, as easily as you can on the radio."

But he got up soon after, saying that we were all crazy and he himself was the maddest of the lot, and went away.

AUGUST 27

Livingstone is a curious chap; dapper, fastidious and taciturn. He is almost too much of a gentleman; I have had the feeling, and I think Jane has also, that a part of his reticence is caution, that he is always watchful, subconsciously at least, lest the veneer crack, and something secretly vulgar be exposed.

I am still wondering why he came to see me today; he was sitting, gloved and spatted, in our small living-room when Clara brought his card to me in the garage and I hurried in. Sitting, too, staring at our ridiculous parlor organ, with an odd look on his face.

"Haven't seen one for years," he said, in his clipped and yet deliberate manner. "Where'd you happen on that one?"

"It was here when we came," I explained. He gave it another glance before we sat down, and then apparently dismissed it. But not entirely. Now and then he looked toward it, and once I thought I saw a slight smile, as though back in his mind was some equally faint humorous memory. But he came to the point with a certain directness.

"You're a man of sense," he said. "I came because you've got a head on you."

"I used to have," I admitted modestly.

"Lately, of course—"

He bent forward. "Use it," he said. "Don't let this spirit bunk get you. Easiest stuff in the world to fake."

"I don't intend to let it get me."

He brushed that aside, and glanced once more at the organ.

"You take a thing like that," he said, "and start it in the dark. It gets you creepy in no time. They all use it; it used to be organs like that; now it's phonographs. They say it starts the vibrations! Well, I'll tell you what it does; it gets you worked up. Sometimes it covers something the medium wants to do."

"So I imagine," I agreed.

His volubility suddenly left him then, and



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HERE'S a little lesson in coloring cheeks and lips and keeping them looking natural. Every actress knows the method. All other women should learn it. To see the difference it makes, cover half the picture above—then the other half! The next time you use color do it this way:



Start the color high, well forward on each cheek, in a point, with the fingertips. (It is assumed you use moist rouge; it has brilliance and "spread" impossible to dry color.) Be sure to begin at same point on both cheeks. An inch from base of nose, and upward strokes ending an inch behind the eyes. Spread your rouge backward, in fan-shape, widest just in front of ear. This avoids the artificial look that always follows the application of rouge in round spots.



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he seemed rather at a loss. "Let it alone," he said. "Let well enough alone." After a pause: "There may be something, but let it alone."

And that, so far as I can make out, was the purpose of his visit. He showed a certain relief, as if he had got rid of something momentous to him, and soon after he took an abrupt departure. Being careful to remove his glove, which he had absently put on again, before shaking hands!

Thomas tells me that another attempt was made to get into the house last night. He had left his pruning ladder outside under a tree, and found it upright against Gordon's window this morning . . .

Later: Halliday corroborates Thomas's story, with further details. He was on the lower floor, reading, when he was disturbed by the crash of a pane of glass above. He ran up-stairs, but was evidently heard. There was no one on the ladder when he got there, and a thorough search showed no one in the house.

The window was the one through which he had watched Gordon leave the house by the rope.

AUGUST 28

It is impossible for me tonight to draw my conclusions from last evening's discovery; I have not my old faith in circumstantial evidence. I can only ask myself if an innocent man hides in his own house . . .

Jane had one of her bad headaches last night, and at eleven o'clock I took the car and went in to the village pharmacy. It was closed, however, and I was at a loss to know what to do. In the emergency I thought of Hayward's office; like most country doctors he keeps a medicine cabinet and fills many of his own prescriptions. I went there, therefore, and rang the bell.

It took some time and several rings to rouse the housekeeper, an elderly and taciturn woman, and when she finally opened the door it was to say that the doctor was away, and to attempt to close it again. I prevented this, however, and managed to get past her and into the hall.

"I only want to get some medicine," I explained. "The cabinet is in the back office, isn't it?"

"I'm not allowed to let anybody into the office."

"Nonsense!" I said sharply. "Anyhow, you are not allowing me. I'm going."

She seemed completely at a loss, and I thought too that she was listening. With my hand on the knob of the waiting-room, I caught the attentive look on her face, and found myself listening also. It seemed to me that there was somebody moving in the back office, and immediately after I caught the stealthy closing of a door somewhere. With that she appeared to relax.

"You are sure you know what you want?" she asked.

"Quite sure," I said, and went through the waiting room to the consulting office. She followed me and turned on the light, and stood there watching me intently. The room was filled with tobacco smoke, and she saw that I noticed it, for she said:

"My husband was sitting in here. I'd be glad if you don't say anything about it."

I am not suspicious, and the confession satisfied my faint feeling that something was not quite right in the house. I got the tablets from the cabinet, and being nervous about unlabeled bottles went to the desk; there, neatly piled up, were the month's bills for Hayward's professional services, written in his own untidy hand, and one not finished on the pad.

The woman was still watching me, and I managed to write my label, glue it to the bottle, and make my departure without, I think, showing that I had made any discovery whatever.

But nothing can alter my conviction that Hayward is hiding in his own house, and that he was in that back room when I rang the bell

at something before midnight. Not even Halliday's opinion that, since Hayward is officially at home today, he had the right to be "not at home" last night.

"After all," he said, "give the poor devil his due, Skipper. He works hard, and why shouldn't he get back a day earlier than he is expected and steal a few hours to get out his bills? He has to live."

But he seems to me to be a trifle too casual about it. I admit that he puzzles me, these days.

AUGUST 31

After all, one can find the mysterious where it does not exist. I may not yet know why Halliday considers it necessary to watch the main house at night. But I do know the reason for Livingstone's extraordinary visit.

Mrs. Livingstone, sitting with Edith during her convalescence, read the letter from Evanston, and is eager to form a similar circle, to sit in the house itself. And poor Livingstone is opposing it; it is making, for some reason or other, quite a business of it.

"After all, why not?" she urged today. "It can be quite secret."

She was supported in this by Edith, and even, half-heartedly, by Jane herself. A change of front which astonishes me. Mrs. Livingstone has apparently some absurd idea that we may receive "a clue—or something," as she vaguely puts it. And on my firm refusal departed, indignantly convinced that I have lost a great opportunity to solve our mystery . . .

Later: Halliday wants the séance! Nothing has so surprised me in years as his willingness to join the table-tippers. But I suspect in him some purpose not far removed from Mrs. Livingstone's, although just what he hopes to discover baffles me entirely.

"Why not?" he said, when I told him. "After all, we have to keep an open mind on this thing, and we've had enough already to make something of a case for the other side."

"The other side of what?"

"The other side of the veil," he explained gravely, and then, seeing my face, was obliged to laugh.

"There is a pleasure in being mad, which none but madmen know," he quoted at me. "I've heard you say that Descartes advises us to seek for truth, freed from all preconceived ideas. Who are we, to stand in the way of truth?"

"And we are to search for it sitting around a table in the dark?"

"Precisely that, Skipper," he said with sudden gravity, and has left me to make what I can of that . . .

Twelve days have now elapsed since the murder here, and the police know no more than they did on the morning of the twentieth.

Now and then a car stops outside the gate, but our curious crowds are gone. Save that some nocturnal relic-hunter has clipped a corner off the sun-dial, the place is much as it was before.

All this water has gone over the dam, and it has brought us nothing.

SEPTEMBER 1

I dare say there is no type of investigation in which the grave—no pun here—is so mixed with the gay, as in this particular psychic search on which we are at present engaged. For, let Halliday use it for such purposes as he will, to Jane, Edith and Mrs. Livingstone it is a deadly serious matter.

Their attitudes are peculiar. Jane accepts it stoically and without surprise; it is almost as though from the beginning she has known that it was to happen. But she is nervous; she has eaten almost nothing all day.

Edith shows a peculiar and rather set-faced intensity. Whether she knows that something quite different lies behind it, or only suspects it, I do not know.

Halliday, also, is grave and quiet. He is less interested, however, in the manner of the sitting than in its *dramatis personae*. The list he

has made out himself: Hayward, the two Livingstones, Jane, Edith and himself. On my pointing out a slight omission, namely, myself, he told me cheerfully that I belonged among the Scribes and Pharisees.

"The Scribes, anyhow," he said. "You are to sit by the red lamp and make notes. I am particularly anxious to have notes," he added. On the other hand, Mrs. Livingstone has entered into it with extraordinary zest. She appeared this afternoon, slightly wheezy with the heat, carrying a black curtain of some heavy material and demanding a hammer and assistance before she was fairly out of her car. As it was apparently up to me to furnish both I did so, but anything less conducive to a spiritual state of mind than the preparations which followed at the main house it would be hard to find.

To stand on a ladder in the heat of the den, and to nail up that curtain across a corner with no more ritual than if I had been hanging a picture; to place inside it a small table and a bell on it, while beside it leaned an old guitar, resurrected from the attic and minus two strings, struck me as poor psychological preparation for confronting the unknown.

But we are curious creatures. The sun was low before we had finished, and as we sat resting from our labors, dusk began to creep into the house. And with it came—self-created, of course—a sort of awe of that cabinet I had myself just made; it took on mystery; behind its heavy folds almost anything might happen. It brooded over the room, tall and menacing, with folds that seemed to sway with some unseen life behind them.

I left Mrs. Livingstone placing chairs about a small table and went out into the air!

The arrangements are now complete. Mrs. Livingstone has brought over a phonograph, with a collection of what appear to be most lugubrious records; she also promises Livingstone, alive or dead.

"I left him sulking," she said. "But he will feel better after he's had his dinner."

And to this frivolous measure we start the night's proceedings.

NOTES MADE DURING FIRST SÉANCE

September 1, 11:15 P. M.—Present: Jane, Edith, Hayward, the two Livingstones, Halliday and myself. Livingstone and Edith examining house. All outside doors locked and windows boarded. The red lamp on small stand in far corner diagonally opposite cabinet and my chair beside it.

11:30—All is ready. Mrs. Livingstone at end of table, next to cabinet. On her left Jane, Hayward and Mr. Livingstone. On her right, Halliday and Edith. A red silk handkerchief over lamp makes light very faint. I have started the phonograph, according to instructions. I was right about it; it is playing: "Shall We Gather at the River?"

11:45—Small raps on the table, and one strong one, like the blow of a doubled fist.

11:47—The table is moving, twisting about. It ceases and the knocks come again.

11:50—The curtain of the cabinet seems to be moving. No one else has apparently noticed it. I have stopped the phonograph.

11:55—The curtain has blown out as far as Mrs. Livingstone's shoulder. All see it. Edith says something has touched her on the right arm. To my inquiry if anyone has relaxed his grasp of the hand he is holding, no one has done so.

12:00—The bell inside the cabinet has been knocked from the table, with such violence that it rolls out into the room.

12:10—Nothing since the bell fell. Livingstone has asked if less light is required, and by knocks the reply is "Yes." I have put out the lamp.

(The following notes were made in the dark and are not very distinct. I have supplemented them from memory.)

All quiet since the last entry. There is a mouse apparently playing about in the library. Edith says that Jane seems to be in a sort of trance. She is breathing heavily.

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One must be born with such a form, with such a skin. But one cannot give oneself daily to the rough caresses of the surf and have what she had—that shimmering, luminous softness that played almost imperceptibly over her features, from the living lustre of her hair.

"What is it you do," I questioned, "that makes your hair so live and radiant?"

"That is my one secret of beauty," she said. "A secret that every hairdresser knows—that every woman should know. I use—a touch of henna in the shampoo."

"But henna—" I exclaimed.

"No woman is ever convinced until she has tried it," she said. "Yet every friend I've ever told who has found the proper blend of just a touch of henna with a good shampoo, has had a compliment from every man she knew, next day, upon the lustrous beauty of her hair. And yet, whether her hair was blonde, or brunette, it had only been made more gloriously itself—unchanged."

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More raps, apparently on door frame into library. I am cold, but probably nerves.

There is a sense of soft movement in the library; the covers are rustling; the prisms of the chandelier can be heard.

Edith says her chair is being slowly lifted. It has crashed to the floor. A hand has apparently run over the guitar strings. All complain of cold. I am alarmed about Jane.

I notice the herbal odor again; no one else has, apparently.

(Note: At this point, Jane's breathing continuing labored, and my apprehension growing, I insisted on terminating the séance.)

SEPTEMBER 2

Jane shows no ill effect from last night, and indeed appears to have no knowledge of the later phenomena.

"I think I must have fallen asleep," she said this morning. "How silly of me!"

She has no idea of her entranced condition, and I have not told her. She accepts the idea of a second sitting tonight, without enthusiasm, but apparently with the fatalistic idea that what must be must be. She took a little tea and toast this morning . . .

As to what Halliday had hoped to discover, I am as completely in the dark as ever. On my decision to end the séance, and on turning on the lights as I did, without warning, the group was seen to be as it had been at the beginning, except that Mrs. Livingstone's chair appeared to have been pushed back, and was somewhat nearer the cabinet than before.

Hayward, so far as I can tell, had not changed his position. His attitude throughout seemed to me to be one of polite but rather uneasy skepticism. Livingstone, on the other hand, showed strong nervous excitement from first to last, but certainly never left the table.

He is ill today, which is not surprising, but I understand the intention is to carry on the experiment without him tonight . . .

Regarding the phenomena themselves, what can I do but accept them? Certainly they showed no connection with what Mrs. Livingstone likes to call the spirit world; on the other hand, either they were genuine, or they showed an experience in trickery utterly beyond any member of our small group.

And who would trick us? And why?

Livingstone was right, however, as to the psychological effect of the preliminaries; in spite of myself they influenced me. The music, the low light followed by darkness, the strange and fearful expectancy of something beyond our ken, all added to the history of the house itself and its recent tragedy, had prepared us for anything.

The billowing of the cabinet curtain was particularly terrible. Skeptic as I am, I had the feeling of some dreadful thing behind it; something one should not see, and yet somehow might see . . .

Both Crawford and Cameron believe that certain individuals have the ability to project from their bodies rod-like structures of energy, invisible to the naked eye but capable of producing levitations, raps and other phenomena. They believe that these structures are utilized by outside spirits, or "controls." My own conviction is that if such powers exist, they are not directed from outside, but by the medium's subconscious mind. In that case, of course, it is possible that Jane was the innocent author of last night's entertainment.

Mrs. Livingstone suggests that if we secure anything of interest tonight, I consult Cameron with a view to his joining us later on . . .

1:00 A. M.—Notes of séance held on evening of September 2. Largely from memory, since all the later part was held without light, but made immediately following séance. Present: Jane, Edith, Hayward, Halliday, Mrs. Livingstone and myself.

Livingstone absent.

I have moved lamp out from corner, and am now near door into hall.

Doors from den and library into hall closed. Door into library open.

11:10—Table moves almost immediately.

Edith says it is rising from floor. It has risen, but one leg remains on floor.

11:15—All remove hands, and table settles down.

11:20—Loud raps on table. Construed as demand for less light. Handkerchief thrown over lamp. Curtain of cabinet billows into room. Guitar overturned inside cabinet. All quiet now.

No phenomena whatever for about ten minutes. Jane very quiet. Hayward feels her pulse; is fast but strong. Mrs. Livingstone asks if too much light, and rap replies "yes." I have put out the lamp.

(Note: From here on I was able only to jot down a word or two in longhand, the previous night's experiment of making stenographic notes in darkness having shown its practical impossibility. The following record I have since elaborated from memory.)

The bell in cabinet rings violently and is flung across room, striking door into hall.

A small light, bluish-white, about a foot above Jane's head. It shines for a moment and then disappears.

It has flashed again, near the fireplace.

A fine but steady tattoo is being beaten, apparently outside of the door to hall. A tap or two on metal, possibly the fender.

Silence.

Jane apparently in trance.

The sounds extend into the library, and there is movement there. The covers seem to be in motion as before. The prisms of chandelier tinkle like small bells. From where I sit I can see a small light over bookcase in library. It is gone.

The herbal odor again.

Jane is groaning and moving in her chair. Mrs. Livingstone and Hayward having trouble holding her hands. She calls "Here! Here!" sharply.

Hayward says something has touched him on the shoulder. "Something floated by me just now," he says, "on the left. It touched my shoulder."

A crash on the table, I notice the herbal odor once more. Silence again.

Something is in the hall. It is groping its way along. It is at the door beside me . . .

My notes end here. I had reached the limit of my endurance, and as the switch was beside me, I turned on the lights. As before, Mrs. Livingstone's chair seemed somewhat nearer the cabinet; no other changes in position, except that Halliday had gone out to search hall and lower floor. The bell was on floor near door into hall, and lying on table Smythe's "Everyday Essays."

To the best of my knowledge this book was in the library at the beginning of the séance.

No signs of disturbance in library or hall, to account for sounds I heard. But an unfortunate situation has arisen, owing to Mrs. Livingstone's failure to lock door from hall to drive. She had pushed the bolt, but as the door was not entirely closed, it had not engaged. We found this door standing open.

This, however, although Hayward seems uneasy, hardly invalidates the extraordinary phenomena secured tonight.

Jane exhausted, and Edith with her.

SEPTEMBER 3

I have seen Cameron, and he will come out. He has evidently been seriously ill, but it shows the dominance of the mental over the physical that he brushed aside my apologies and went directly to the matter in hand.

But it is a curious thing to reflect that, a short time ago, it would have been I who was the skeptic and Cameron who would have been ranged on the other side. Today it was I who was excited. And Cameron who was to be convinced!

"This Edith, of whom you speak," he said, "how old is she?"

"Twenty."

"A nervous type?"

"Yes, and no. Not hysterical, if that's what you mean."

Certain of the phenomena, too, seem to

puzzle him. The table levitation, the lights and other manifestations were not unusual, he said, with a strong physical medium present, and this he imagined Jane to be. The book, however, particularly attracted his interest. Over my notes on that he sat thinking for some time.

"You say it crashed onto the table?"

"At the last, yes. But Doctor Hayward, who was nearest the library door, says that after my wife called 'Here!' he felt something pass his shoulder. Float past, is the way he puts it. He thinks it was the book, and that it dropped onto the table after that."

"About what you heard in the hall—was this hall dark?"

"Yes. There were no lights anywhere in the house."

"You heard footsteps?"

"No. It was like something feeling its way along. You know what I mean . . ."

Toward the end of the conference he leaned back and studied me through his glasses.

"What started you on this, Porter?" he said.

He did not remind me, although he might well have done so, that my previous attitude to him and his kind had been one of sort of indifferent contempt; that, during his entire time at the university, I had never so much as set foot in his rooms, nor asked him into my house; that on the two or three times when we had met, I had taken no pains to hide my rejection of him and all that he stood for.

But it was implied in his question, and I dare say I colored. I told him, however, as best I could, and he smiled.

"I rather imagine," he said, "that when we pass over, our interest in this plane of existence is impersonal; we may hope to educate it as to what is beyond. But we hardly carry our desires for revenge with us."

Of all that I told him, however, the Evanston matter interested him most. Over the letter he sat for a long time, his heavy, almost hairless head sunk forward as he read and reread it.

"Curious," he said. "What do you make out of it?"

"A great deal," I told him, and detailed my discovery of the letter behind the drawer of the desk, and my theory as to old Horace Porter's death. I had brought that letter also, and he studied it as carefully as he had the other.

"The enormity of the idea," he repeated. "That's a strong phrase. And he threatens to call in the police! Have you any notion as to what this idea may have been?"

"Not the slightest," I said frankly.

"I would like to keep this for a while. If you don't mind," he said at last. "I have a medium here in town—but I forget. You don't believe in such things!"

"I don't know what I believe. But you are welcome to it, of course."

It was only after this matter of the letter that he finally agreed to come out the day after tomorrow.

SEPTEMBER 4

The words "making trouble," lightly underscored on page 24 of Smythe's "Everyday Essays," are the key to Gordon's cipher. The entire sentence is: "It is often the ingenious rather than the malicious who go about the world making trouble."

In a few hours, then, we shall have solved our mystery, or at least such portion of it as is locked in the diary. Read with this key we have already translated the sentence I recorded here on the twenty-second of August. Although we cannot interpret it without the context, it becomes:

"The G. P. stuff went big last night."

In the same way the scrap of paper found in my garage is now discovered to read, "Smythe P. 24"—Edith's single error lying in the number, which she had remembered as 28.

Halliday suggests that the G. P. may refer to George Pierce, but makes no attempt to explain the reference . . .

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Halliday's story of his discovery is interesting; certain portions of the two séances he apparently accepts without comment save "It was the usual stuff," and lets it go at that. Although "usual" is hardly the word I should myself use in that connection. But the book was, as I gather it, not the usual stuff.

"There was something about the way it came, that night of the séance," he says, and makes a gesture. "Mrs. Porter called it, and it came. Like a dog," he says, and watches me to be sure I am not laughing at him.

However that may be, the book and the strange manner of its arrival in our midst had interested him, and he had spent some time over it. Thus, he found where it belonged in the library, and tried to discover some significance in that. But there was none.

"I drew a blank there," he says. "I examined the wall behind, but there was nothing. You see, it couldn't have been thrown in; it wasn't possible. And when Hayward said it touched him, both his hands were being held. In other words, he didn't put it there."

All the time, I gather, he was feeling extremely foolish. He would pause now and then, in order to assure me that he felt "a bit silly." He didn't believe in such things; where there was a natural phenomenon there was a natural law to account for it. Maybe telekinesis, or whatever they called it.

"But there had to be some reason for that book," he says. "I just sat down and went through it."

He has taken the key words to the city, and has just telephoned (2 P. M.) that the detective bureau has put a staff to work on it.

"It will be several hours," he said. "It's slow work. But I'll be out with the sheets as soon as they've finished."

SEPTEMBER 5

Too much exhausted today to make any coherent record. The four hours last night in the District Attorney's office have worn me out. I have called off Cameron tonight for the same reason.

The mystery seems to be increased, rather than solved, by the diary. By such portions, at least, as were read to me. And I do not understand the conditions under which I was questioned, nor the questions themselves. Good Lord, are they suspecting me again? Halliday is still in town . . .

Later:

Edith has removed my anxiety as to Halliday's return. He has telephoned, and she has just brought me the message.

"He says you are not to worry," she reports. "He is working with them on the case. And you will not be disturbed again."

She looks pale, does Edith, and Jane is not much better. I have told Jane the whole matter; my absence last night had possibly prepared her, but the very confession that I had been subjected to what amounted to the third degree has roused her to a fury of indignation.

"How can they dare such a thing!" she said. "How can they even think it?"

"It's their business to believe a man guilty until he proves his innocence," I reminded her. "And Gordon thought it; you must remember that."

For nothing is more clear to me today than that this diary of Gordon's, which Halliday himself carried to the police, has somehow incriminated me.

SEPTEMBER 6

Halliday is still in town. I can do nothing but wait here, eating my heart out with anxiety, and allowing my imagination to run away with me in a thousand ways.

My women-folk support me according to their kind. Jane serves me sweetbreads for luncheon, and Edith sits by, giving me an occasional almost furtive caress as an evidence of her faith in me.

But Edith is curiously lifeless; that small but burning flame in her which we call optimism, for want of a better word, seems definitely

quenched. She is silent and apathetic, and has been so since yesterday.

She seems to resent our having sent in the key to the diary.

"If only you hadn't done that," she said today.

"What else could we do? We have to get at the bottom of this thing."

"I don't see that it has got you anywhere. It has only mused things up."

What she has in her mind I do not know, unless, poor child, she has been building a future on Halliday's solving of the crime, and that now that prospect is gone. She tells me that Starr has been on guard at the main house, quietly, for the two nights Halliday has been in town. But if she knows any explanation of his presence she does not give it.

"He's afraid to go inside," she said, scornfully. "He just sits out on the terrace and smokes. If anybody said boo behind him he'd jump into the bay and drown himself."

She has apparently implicit faith in Halliday's ability to keep me from further indignity. But I am not so certain. The sound of a car on the highway sets my pulse to beating like a riveting machine; at the arrival of the Morrison truck a few minutes ago with some belated buttermilk I got up and buttoned my coat.

My place in my little world behind the drain pipe is neither large nor important, but it is difficult for me to imagine it without me.

"I suppose the worst to happen," said Matthew Arnold to the portly jeweler from Cheapside; "suppose even yourself to be the victim; il n'y a pas d'homme necessaire . . . The great mundane movement would still go on, the gravel walks of your villa would still be rolled, dividends would still be paid at the bank, omnibuses would still run, there would be the same old crush at the corner of Fenchurch Street . . ."

This is the sixth. It was on the fourth, then, a few hours after Halliday had gone to the city, that a taxi stopped here, and Greenough got out. There seemed to me to be a trifle more than his usual ponderousness in his manner, and a distinct concentration in the way he looked at me as I came down the staircase. At the same time, he was civility itself, and he stated his errand matter-of-factly. They had a staff working on the diary, and he knew I would like to be present when it was finished.

"It's a long job," he said. "But we've split it into a half-dozen parts, and it ought to be ready by eight or half past."

It was six then, and as our early dinner was almost ready, I asked him to stay. We ate cheerfully enough, took the seven-fifteen express from Oakville, and were in town and at the county building at something before ten. I was surprised but not startled to find Benchley, the Sheriff, there, and three or four other men, including Hemingway, the District Attorney. Hemingway held some typed sheets in his hand when we entered, and was reading them carefully. Halliday was standing by a window staring out into the square, and the first indication I had that anything was wrong was the expression on his face as he turned and saw me.

The second was a polite invitation to Halliday to leave the room, and his manner of receiving it.

"I'm staying," he said flatly. "If there's any objection to that, I shall advise Mr. Porter to make no statement and to answer no questions until he can be properly protected."

"Protected?" I asked. "Protected from what?"

"From this strong-arm outfit," said Halliday, and surveyed the room with his jaw thrust forward.

"I am under arrest?"

Hemingway put down the papers and took off his glasses.

"Certainly not," he said. "Your young friend is being slightly dramatic. I know that you want this mystery solved as much as we do; more, since it directly concerns

you. This is not a trap, Mr. Porter; we shall ask you some questions, and I hope you will answer them. That is all."

"I reserve the right to interfere in case of any trick," Halliday put in.

"We have framed no trick questions," Hemingway said quietly. "We want the facts, that's all."

He rang a bell, and a secretary came in. My mouth was dry and some one placed a glass of water before me. From that on, for four hours, I answered questions; at the end of that time I walked out, still free although slightly dizzy . . .

(Note: Halliday has recently secured a copy of the stenographic notes of that night. As they would make a small volume in themselves, I give here only such portions as seem to forward the narrative.)

Q. Your name, please.

A. William Allen Porter.

Q. Age?

A. Forty-six.

Q. Your profession is?

A. I am a professor of English literature at — University.

Q. You own the property at Oakville, known as Twin Hollows?

A. I do. I inherited it something more than a year ago on the death of my uncle, Horace Porter.

Q. Had you known that this property was to come to you on your Uncle's death?

A. It was always understood between us. He had no other heirs . . .

Q. Had you any previous acquaintance with Mr. Bethel? I mean, before he took your house?

A. None whatever. I never saw him until he came out to take possession. His secretary inspected the house, and negotiations were carried on through my attorney.

Q. In any of your talks with Mr. Bethel, did you gather that he had known Mr. Horace Porter previous to his death?

A. Never.

Q. When you rented the house, did you retain any keys to it?

A. I have a full set in my possession.

Q. You have access to the house, then?

A. I never used my keys, if that's what you mean.

Q. On the night of the twenty-sixth of July, Mr. Bethel's secretary was attacked outside the kitchen door of the house, and managed to ring the bell there before he fell unconscious. Just where were you, Mr. Porter, when that bell rang?

A. The police have my statement as to that. By the sun-dial.

Q. Doctor Hayward was on the road in his car; you were by the sun-dial, close to the house. Yet when he reached you, you had apparently only found this boy. Is that correct?

A. It seems to me that the question there might be, was Hayward on the main road that night, as he says, or nearer to the house than he admits . . .

Q. You own a boat, I believe?

A. I inherited one with the property. A sloop.

Q. Do you sail that boat yourself?

A. I don't know one end of it from the other . . .

Q. In your various conversations with Mr. Bethel, did he ever mention the character of the house? By that, I mean any curious quality in the house itself?

A. He recognized such a quality. Yes.

Q. Did he ever mention a letter written by him to a Mr. Cameron here in the city? A member of a society for psychical research? Relative to the house?

A. Never. But I know of the letter. Cameron sent me word of it a day or so ago.

Q. Are you a believer in spiritualism?

A. I never have been. But recently I—

(Note: Here I caught a warning glance from Halliday and changed what I had intended to say.)

Recently I have been trying to preserve an open mind on the subject.

Q. Why recently?



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A. For one thing, Mr. Bethel had found the house queer; so had the secretary . . .

Q. On the day you asked the secretary to luncheon, the intention was to allow Mr. Bethel to go through his room?

A. Bethel? Certainly not.

Q. I shall read you this entry from Gordon's diary. (Reads) "Porter asked me to lunch today, so B. could go through my room. They left the knife, but at least they know I have it."

A. That's a lie! I asked him to luncheon so Halliday could search his room. It was Halliday who found the knife. You can ask him.

Q. We'll let that go, just now, and come to the night you were found in the house, Mr. Porter, by Mr. Halliday.

A. I wasn't found in the house by Mr. Halliday. We had started for it together. The maid, Annie Cochran, had reported a quarrel between Mr. Bethel and Gordon, and that Gordon had gone away. You must remember that we suspected the boy of being the killer. I was anxious, and went for Halliday.

Q. What time did the maid tell you this?

A. About seven-thirty. Possibly eight o'clock.

Q. And when did you go for Mr. Halliday?

A. It was about eleven, I imagine.

Q. What did you do in the interval?

A. She was nervous, and I took her home. After that we had callers.

Q. Did you see Mr. Bethel during that interval?

A. No.

Q. Had it occurred to you that Gordon might be going to see the police?

A. I never thought of it. Why should he be going to the police?

Q. Did Mr. Bethel think of it?

A. I've told you; I didn't see him . . .

Q. On the night of the murder in the house at Twin Hollows, what led to your discovery of the crime?

A. My wife heard the telephone ring, and I went to it. All three buildings are on one line, and the receiver at the main house was down. I heard a crash, and heavy breathing near the telephone.

Q. That made you suspicious?

A. I had been expecting trouble between Mr. Bethel and Gordon.

Q. Why did you expect trouble?

A. I knew they had quarreled. Mr. Bethel had told me that it was he who had struck Gordon, mistaking him for a burglar, and that Gordon suspected it.

Q. When did he tell you that?

A. I don't know exactly. About three days before the murder, I think.

Q. Can you remember the burden of that conversation?

A. Very well. He said that he was suspicious of the boy; that he was weak and vicious, and possibly criminal. He knew he was going out at night. On the night of the twenty-sixth of July Gordon was out, and he dragged himself down-stairs. When he heard him at the kitchen door he struck him. But he maintained that he had not tied him. I believe that, personally. He had one useless hand.

Q. Did you ever have any reason to believe that Mr. Bethel exaggerated his infirmity?

A. Exaggerated it? What do you mean?

Q. You believe he was as helpless as he appeared?

A. I can't imagine a man assuming such a thing . . .

Q. Now, Mr. Porter, you have said that the telephone receiver at the main house was down, and you heard over it enough to alarm you?

A. Yes.

Q. It rang, and you went to it?

A. Yes.

Q. How could it ring, if the other receiver was down?

A. As a matter of fact, I didn't hear it. My wife said it had rung, and to satisfy her I went to it . . .

Q. Did the secretary, Gordon, ever approach you on a matter of money?

A. Money? I don't understand the question.

Q. Did he ever ask you for money? Or intimate that he needed it?

A. Never. He said something once about giving up his position . . .

Q. Where was he, the night you held the conversation with Mr. Bethel, relative to him?

A. Here in the city, I believe.

Q. And Mr. Bethel thought he might have gone to the police?

A. That's the second time you have intimated that Gordon had something to tell the police. I can't talk in the dark like this. If anybody wanted to avoid the police, it was this boy . . .

Q. I am going back to the night Mr. Halliday found you in the house—

A. He didn't find me. We had started there together.

Q. You say you saw a figure at the foot of the stairs, and fired at it?

A. I didn't intend to fire.

Q. You didn't recognize this figure?

A. No.

Q. It was not Mr. Bethel?

A. Bethel? No. He was locked in his room . . .

Q. You say you are not a spiritualist?

A. Certainly not.

Q. You have never made any experiments in spiritualism?

A. I have been present at one or two séances.

Q. When? Recently?

A. We have held two sittings in the main house within the last few days.

Q. Who were present at these séances? . . .

Q. When did you first hear of the symbol of a triangle inside a circle?

A. If you mean in connection with the crimes—

Q. Before that. You told Mr. Greenough, some time ago, that you had heard of it in some other connection.

A. I told him I had happened on it in an old book on Black Magic, and told a group of women about it. It was a purely facetious remark.

Q. Can you account for its use in connection with these crimes?

A. I have no official knowledge that it was used in connection with the crimes. Only with the sheep-killing.

Q. But you know it was so used?

A. I know that it was used once when Mr. Greenough did not find it.

Q. Where was that?

A. On a tree near where the Morrison truck was discovered. I have heard it was on Carroway's boat, but I don't know that. I know it was deliberately put on my car, after Mr. Halliday was hurt.

Q. You say, put on the car? Do you mean by that, Mr. Bethel did it?

A. Bethel? How could he? We have thought lately that Gordon was responsible. We found a piece of his cipher near by.

Q. You have felt all along that Gordon was guilty?

A. I won't say that. I would say that the burden of the evidence indicated that he was guilty. Mr. Halliday has had considerable doubt of his guilt.

Q. Have you ever considered that it might be Bethel who killed Gordon?

A. Never. He couldn't have done it.

Q. But if he had had assistance?

A. Are you telling me that Bethel did kill Gordon?

Q. I am telling you that somebody killed Gordon, Mr. Porter. His body was washed ashore at Bass Cove this morning.

Now comes the weirdest part of the whole mystery of the Red Lamp—and the net is closing in on the murderer with an inexorable-ness that even Professor Porter does not realize—in September

The Gold in Fish

(Continued from page 31)

saddest sights in the world. Maybe Delancey Street was our water——"

"You don't mean that—mama——"

"Morris knows I ain't ungrateful, papa—every mother should have such a son. Say, I guess if it's best for him and Irma and the children we should be Fish and not Goldfish, for the few years I got left to be Fish, I should make a scandal about it."

"It is best, mother. Best from every angle. Best I can assure you for my business and social interests. See, mother, I've brought your new engraved cards for us all. Mrs. Julius Fish, Mr. Maurice Fish. Miss Birdie Fish."

"Such an extravagance, son. For what we need cards? To throw them around at doors in the apartment house so maybe we can get a little neighborliness out of some in the building? Callink cards. We're used to them from home. Not, papa?" The warmth of humor flowed back into Mrs. Goldfish's little cheeks. She could be like that. Surrender with grace and good spirit. "Only don't be so sure, son, with your cards here already made for Birdie, you got it so easy to turn your sister around your little finger like us."

"It's up to you, mother, and father, to help make Birdie understand from the start. I'm not going to have Birdie gumming up the machinery. She's gummed it up enough. More than I propose to tell right here. If Birdie is clever, she won't oppose——"

"That must be Birdie now in the keyhole with her key. Now, Morris, don't you start nothing with your sister. You neither, Irma. I hate always it should be such fussings and teasings between you."

There entered then into the Heppelwhite, into the pleasant lavender of a dusk which flowed into the bow window, Miss Birdie Goldfish. Better say ripped. Ripped into the Heppelwhite. Ripped into the lavender. Ripped into the dusk. Tearing the mood, the environment asunder as if it had all been so much paper stretched across a hoop.

Birdie entered a room precisely like that. As if she had splashed through a hoop.

"Hello, everybody," she said and pulled off by the brim one of those small, untrimmed soft felt hats in which nine out of ten women feel cunning whether they look it or not.

Birdie did not look cunning in it. To be fair, it is doubtful if she felt it. Birdie was one of those lower-middle-register people who come large and hoarse. There could have been nothing cunning about Birdie. When Birdie opened her mouth, she boomed. Literally that.

"Smells like a conference or a row, or both," said Miss Goldfish and spun her hat from her wrist with a twist of wrist.

"Birdie!"

"What's the in-the-gloaming idea?" said Miss Goldfish and switched on some side bracket crystal chandeliers (Sinclair estate), ran her hand through her black bobbed hair, plucked her rather too close-fitting black satin dress away from its habit of clinging to her, walked over, threw open one of the windows and cocked herself on the sill.

"Birdie, you'll fall out."

"Spring is come and the birds are singing," said Miss Goldfish and leaned over to peck her father with a kiss on as much of the tip of his ear as she could reach, and proceeded, with the aid of the mirror in the lid of a small round vanity box, to tinker with the clipped edges of her hair.

"Well, your Holiness," said Miss Goldfish to her brother, but directing her gaze to her reflection in the bit of mirror, "what you got under your little round hat?"

"Birdie—shh-h, that ain't nice. Suppose some gay neighbors should hear you. You should have respect for everybody's religion even if it ain't your own."

"Oh ma, ring a bell every time you want to nag, honey. It's easier," said Miss Goldfish, smearing a plentiful area of red along her lips

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and with the tip of her little finger making it bow enormously under her nose.

"Ain't that fine! My daughter tells me I should ring a bell when—"

"Charming," said Mrs. Maurice Fish, and blew a smoke ring to the ceiling.

Miss Goldfish inclined a glance at her sister-in-law over a powder-puff about to make an onslaught. "Huh?"

"Charming, was all I said."

And then Miss Goldfish's voice took unto itself the tilt of a fog horn trying to be a pitch pipe. "My word! So glad you think so!"

"Birdie, you shouldn't talk so to Irma."

"Never mind, mother, she is no more disgusting than usual."

"Same to you, dear," said Miss Goldfish complacently to her reflection, and swinging her head on the pillar of short neck for a peer at her own profile.

In a family that by a principle of its own private biology insisted upon the infallibility of family resemblance, Birdie was said to be like unto her mother. Well, if Birdie resembled her mother, she had flowed a little over at that resemblance.

Where little Mrs. Goldfish's features had quite a little jut to them out of the bony structure of face, Birdie's were softly imbedded in heavy cheek, and her chin, instead of tapering down into wattles, threatened, ever so slightly, to double. There was a little ridge right on the back of Birdie's neck that the bobbed hair enhanced. That knob was not infrequently red. It was a careful habit of Birdie's to massage it during quiet periods at the Cutie Shop, where Birdie sold cutenesses to cuties.

And Birdie's opulence she managed somehow to pour into frocks slightly too small for it. There was always a straining across the bust line. That look of armholes about to burst.

It must have been because Birdie insisted upon wearing frocks ready-made out of the Cutie Shop. A little fourteen by eighteen feet mauve and wisteria concoction oozed in between a sheet-music shop and a theatrical ticket agency in the Broadway forties, and catering to a trade known along the Rialto as Squabs, Ponies, Flappers and Pets.

Somewhere imbedded in Birdie's face was a certain squab-young prettiness. A one-hundred-and-seventy-six pound prettiness.

When Birdie walked on the stilts of heels that threw her forward and her too modish dress clung and climbed about her calves, loiterers on Broadway's corners said "Whoops, la la!" and sometimes Birdie, who was neither timid nor flirtatious, turned on them with a shrug of her plump shoulders and a leer: "See anything green?"

When upon occasion her brother eyed her through his half slitted eyes, the somnolent ones that lay in a gaze that matched his voice, Birdie would put that same question.

She was putting it now: "See anything green, lovelingest brother?" she said and involuntarily yanked at her skirt where it rode up to reveal the edge of purple and vermilion bloomer.

"Birdie, stop startink somethink right away with your brother. It's not nice. It's just as well, Morris, she should right away know it, what's happened to her. Look, Birdie, your brother has got a surprise for you. Here are your new callink cards. We had a liability and now we got an asset."

Birdie, still ensconced in window frame, reached to take the small cardboard box from her mother, but her eyes and her nose and her mouth crinkling toward her brother.

"What's rotten in Denmark this evening?" she said and automatically ran her finger across to feel of the engraving. "Miss Birdie Fish. Miss Bi— Say—hey—waiter—bring me the rest of my order. I didn't say half-portion. Where's the other half, waiter?"

"We ain't Goldfish no more, Birdie. For business and society reasons. It's a vulgarity, Birdie, a family like ours should call itself Goldfish. Morris has got the good sense we should get it changed by court. Birdie Fish.

That sounds like something. Ain't it, papa?"

Miss Goldfish swung slowly out of the window frame, knees bent, head back, and palms on her hips beginning a paddywhack against her thighs.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" she cried and gasped for breath and cried again. "Oh! Oh! Oh! This is the best yet. It's too good—too—rich! It cannot be; it could only happen in the funny-strips or a padded cell. My brother decides to change the family name. The family comes home and finds itself amputated—"

"You might have known, mother, she would act like an idiot and a vulgar one at that."

"Wild woman," said Irma and mashed out her cigaret on a chalcedony tray from the Ronald sale.

"You poor fish," cried Birdie and kept rocking. "Goldfish is a liability, is it? Well, how's gefuldte fish? Morris Gefuldte Fish. At least when you were amputating why didn't you cut off the tail, you poor Fish, and leave the Gold?"

"Because Gold is a common and obviously modified name. Everybody has done it that way. Look in the telephone book and you'll see fifty Golds to one Fish. There is distinction to the name Fish. If it is good enough for Stuyvesant Fish and Hamilton Fish, it is good enough for Maurice Fish, and should be good enough for Birdie Fish. You have as much reason to be grateful, Birdie, as the rest of us. It cannot be much of an asset to a girl, even in the business you insist upon choosing for yourself, to have to sign herself Birdie Goldfish."

"Well," cried Birdie, her face suddenly ceasing into angles, "let me tell you something, Morris Goldfish—and Morris Goldfish you'll be to me to the end of the chapter—just you put this in your jade and ivory cigaret holder and smoke it: I was born Birdie Goldfish, I was confirmed Birdie Goldfish, I was married I am Birdie Goldfish, and so help me, it will take more than a pack of Tiffany visiting cards to make me die anything but Birdie Goldfish. Goldfish, you hear me?"

"Mother, can't you—"

"No, she can't! You've worn them down until they aren't much more than a couple of transfer pictures that you've flattened out on a sheet of paper. I remember the time when ma would have turned and given you *makots* for even suggesting what you've gone and done. Pa too. Look at them now—trying to like it. It's enough to make you cry your eyes out."

"You—"

"Oh, you're the big mogul of the family, all right. I grant you that. You've pulled us up. But only so we don't pull you down. Well, I don't want to pull you down. I'm willing to put up with all this for ma and pa's sake. You've got them buffaloed, all right. But let me tell you there are limits and those limits are Fish!"

"No, those limits aren't Fish, Birdie. Those—those limits, my fine sister, are you! Your coarseness. Your vulgarity. Don't—don't rile me too much, Birdie—today of all days. If it weren't for mother and father and Irma—I could tell you now what those limits are."

"You could, could you!"

"Children!"

"Well, let me tell you right here, my dear brother Mawruss Goldfish, there's nothing about me that you need to be afraid to discuss before ma and pa and anything you got to say to me will be baby-talk before Irma compared to what she hears wafted to her on the south wind patter of her Mah-Jong parties. So whatever you've got to say to me, Brother Mawruss, you can shoot to me right now."

There was a sucked-in look to Maurice Fish's lips as if anger had lashed them to his teeth.

"Don't rile me, Birdie, into saying things we both may regret."

"Then don't take it upon yourself to come home telling me you've changed my name on me as if it was a kitchen apron. You can put that over on ma and pa and maybe your sister Reenie. But I'm a Goldfish, get that. Make me ashamed of it if you can!"

"Morris don't mean, Birdie—"

"Don't he! Don't he? Then what does he mean, ma? He's ashamed of his name! A good name that you and pa have kept clean and decent for us kids."

"I mean that you're a disgrace to our family no matter what name you call us. No girl with an iota of respect for her surroundings and with every comfort hers for the asking will spend her time clerking in a little fourth-rate, hand-me-down, chorus-girl emporium, when she has the opportunity to stay at home and study and improve herself and—"

"Yes, opportunity! I'd be a smart one to get myself sucked down the way you've sucked down ma and pa. I admit I'm not stuck on my job, but it's the best a low-brow like me can hope for. I'm low-brow maybe, but I'm not browbeaten."

"Birdie, stop fussing with—"

"Why, ma and pa used to be two individuals before you set about killing them with kindness. Before you took the Goldfish family out of water. That's what they are. Two Goldfish out of water. I know them! I know every time ma puts a hat on her head it gives her a headache. I know how she goes on the sly and buys herself a miltz and sneaks in the kitchen on the cook's day out to fix it for her and pa. I know how pa'd rather haggle selling a second-hand, golden-oak, roller-top, Grand Rapids desk to Jacob Mintz than sit sunning himself all day in a Heppelwhite chair, that he cannot pronounce. Talk about a fish out of water! If ever there were fishes out of water, it's the Goldfishes."

"Birdie—you mustn't holler at your—"

"But not me! I know why I work in the Cutie Shop. Not because I'm any crazier about it than you are! But I pay my way and I go my way. I got a kosher nature and I'm not ashamed of it. Ma and pa have too, only they're bluffed. Well, I'm not. I pay as I go. Maybe I don't go very far, but just the same I'm my own mistress. Get that? My own mistress!"

There flashed across the face of Maurice Fish something over which he seemed to have no control. A grimace of anger that made words like hot coals hop off reluctant lips.

"Your own mistress maybe—but for all I know—more than that! Worse than that."

"What?"

"Oh, you know what I mean. I've been telling you all along. Those cheap traveling salesmen you've been running with. Those Broadway penny-sports you're about with, until a man is afraid to take his own wife to the theater for fear of running into you with one of them."

"What'll I do, sit at home and wait for you to send me some college professors?"

"And now—and now—worse—defaulters—gangsters—crooks—thieves. Talk about being your own mistress—if that was the worst—you've driven me to this—I will say it! Ma! Pa! She's running around town with men whose names aren't fit to be uttered by self-respecting people—she's going to drag us down three steps for every one step we've mounted. Either you cut out that gang, Birdie—those crooks—or I—if mother and father haven't any authority over you—I'll take it to court! Once more before them, I ask you. Are you or are you not going to stop running around town with that crook—that defaulter—that gangster that even today's papers mention in that bond stealing case? Isadore Slupsky."

"Birdie—you ain't been going out again with that Slupsky boy that Morris says ain't nice!"

"Well, well, answer her."

There actually seemed but little left of Morris except his pallor and the lashed lips against his teeth.

"Birdie—don't tell me you been out again with such a man like him."

"Yes, ma. Yes, pa. Yes. Yes. Yes. I had supper with him last night. I had lunch with him today. I can't bring him home so I meet him on street corners. If Isadore's a crook, then so am I. That's how sure I am that boy's being framed. One dirty frame-up after another."

"Oh, she has the lingo, all right. Listen!"
 "That's what's happened to that boy because he's only a kid. And a kid that's sweet and trusting and who has been raised with gangsters and nobody but a drunk old aunt who died in the d. t.'s to raise him, hasn't got much chance of fighting his way out. Alone. Yes, I been seen with him."

"And—go on—and—what—else?"
 "And what else?" said Birdie and looked at her brother with her head forward and the lump on her neck out as if she would charge forward. "And what?"

"It's town talk you've been seen with him. And if they get him, and they'll get him sure if they round up the others on this bond theft, I guess our name, whether it's Fish or Goldfish, will be mixed up with it."

"Birdie!"
 "You've been seen with him. Dinner. Lunch. But what else? Now that you've got me riled. Go on. I guess sooner or later mother and father will have to listen to the kind of tales a dealer walked into my office with this morning. Well, well? Where else have you been seen with him? Where did Birdie spend last night, ma?"

"Why—why, with—Sadie, one of the girls, Morris, what works in her store. Morris—Birdie—I—papa—what?"

"Well, she was seen with—I'll say it if I choke—she was seen coming out of the Grand Lester Hotel this morning with Slupsky! Is it any wonder the name Goldfish is one to be rid of? That's where she was seen with him. Now what have you to say?"

"What have I to say?" said Birdie and smiled the slow kind of a smile that a woman reserves for the smile she turns to her lover. "What have I to say? Why, you poor Fish. You poor decapitated Goldfish. I married Ike Slupsky yesterday at noon."

It was near that midnight when Isadore Slupsky, with Birdie breathing into his collar from the five flights of climb, unlocked the door to his flat in South Simpson Street, Bronx.

A sort of cave damp came out in a billow. Stale bad air. A single electric bulb on the narrow landing kept threatening to blink out.

"Hold your horses, Mr. Edison," said Birdie to it. "We need you to lead us into our rose-grown cottage."

"If I had only known we were coming here tonight, Bird, I'd have come up ahead and opened up the place. Whew!"

"Never mind, Boy. The way I spilled the beans all over the Heppelwhite tonight, we're lucky to have your flat to come to. Lucky too I managed to locate you at Tod's place. The family confab was still fabbing when I made a bee-line for the telephone, my overnightie bag and the front door."

"There," said Slupsky and clicked on a pale smear of hall light. It was hard to wedge in because of a pachyderm procession of trunks down the narrow aisle. "Wait here a minute, Birdie, and I'll go ahead and light up."

"Not on your life," said Birdie, lugging down the slit of hallway after him. "If I stand here long enough to get wedged, you'll have to shoe-horn me out."

The front room of Mr. Slupsky's apartment clicked on to the same blear of yellow light. It was a front room of no rug. Two deal chairs piled on a sofa that bulged springs. A detached cooking range. A wash-basket of dishes, waffle iron, huge ball of clothes-line and a lamp with a broken base. In a room that led off, a bed-spring tipped against the door barred entrance. Beneath the opened window, even at ebb-tide hour of midnight, Simpson Street flowed in distant babble.

"Well!" said Birdie and dropped her patent leather suitcase from nerveless fingers.

"I told you, Bird, we should have gone to the Grand Lester."

"At seven dollars per?"

"This is no place to bring you. It's been the damndest place to sublet. Eleven months of lease signed by me on my hands after the old woman died. Long as I had to keep on



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coming across every month with the twenty-eight bucks for these rooms. I just been keeping this truck stored up here. My aunt wasn't much on style, but it never looked like this when she kept it. This is no place for you, Bird. It's not too late yet to go to a hotel."

There was something about the pale, the eager, the nervous face of Slupsky that reminded you how you imagined animals that leap from crag to crag must look. Llamas or mountain sheep. Fear of precipice. Strain of scurrying up rocky crags without daring to look back. Scramble of slipping feet.

And his pallor. It had somehow crept into his hair and into his eyes. Isadore was the color of something blanched. You could almost imagine that he had paled with fear one day and remained that way.

He was all tan. His face, his hair and the little mustache that twitched in the bewildered, nervous way Charlie Chaplin's has of twitching.

"So this," said Birdie in her voice at its hoarsest, "is home!"

"Bird, you're sore at me now for not telling you how bad it was. I tried to, but you wouldn't listen. I tell you I've got the money to put us up at the hotel."

"Come here," said Birdie, drawing him to her with one big wrench of her arm. "You sweet, scared kid. I could live in a hayrick with you, Boy. That's the way I am. I don't fall often, but I do fall hard. Kiss me, darling, and kiss me quick and again."

Isadore Slupsky was every inch as tall as Birdie, and yet when Birdie embraced her husband it was as if he had to lift his tired pale face to her, and literally she did overshadow his slimmness in curves that all but obliterated him in the confusion of the caress.

"Boy of mine—of mine!" rather yammered Birdie, in the incredible fashion of seeming to talk along toothless gums.

"Toodles-oodles-Bird!" said Slupsky with equal strain upon the credulities and his light mustache nibbling to the saying of it, somewhere along Birdie's cheek.

"Take down those chairs off the sofa, darlingest," said Birdie, reaching for them herself and depositing them on the floor. "I want to talk. And open the windows," said Birdie, doing it herself and dragging the sofa over to it for air. "Never mind trying to clear up, Boy. I'll take care of all that later. There!" said Birdie, and threw off her hat and took his hand and tousled her hair with it.

"Oh, Bird," said Slupsky and let his pale head rest tiredly against the swell of her arm, "a fellow has got to get used to having you. I feel like somebody was kidding me. Honest, honey, you're too good to be true."

"You poor sweet kid. You don't know the half of it, dearie. If you think I'm too good to be true now, wait. You're just going to begin to live. You're like a canoe that somebody's thrown out in the middle of the ocean on a rough day. It's just as well, Boy, I spilled the beans at home tonight instead of waiting the way we planned. Waiting for what? Waiting for the gang to try and frame you another time?"

"I just felt, Bird, maybe it wasn't the best time—"

"I'd like to see anybody try to frame you from now on. If that crowd needs a goat, they got to go looking in somebody else's tin-can pasture. We're going to start new, Boy. Fresh. And let me tell you something else. This flat isn't bad. Five-room flats at twenty-eight dollars a month aren't lying around loose. We'll live out the lease here anyway, and by the time I'm finished with it, you won't know the place. I know this neighborhood. There's a fish market on the corner called Blatz's. When I was a kid down in Delancey Street, we used to be brought out here to visit our swell relations that had graduated from the Bowery to the Bronx. Very next block from here."

"But, Birdie—Birdie, after what you're used to! I tell you I am afford—"

"After what I'm used to! What am I used to? Living in a swell ten-rooms and three baths that fits me like a yama-yama glove.

Like pa always says, what's the use of three baths when you can only take one at a time anyway? You don't know what's what with me, Boy. We've been so busy falling in love we haven't had time to get acquainted."

"There's something in that, Bird."

"You can't realize without living through it yourself what it means to see a grand old pair like my folks being killed with prosperity. They have just given in, Boy, my old folks. And with a smile, God love 'em. But, Boy, come over here and let me tell you something. I'm a rough-neck, honey. A dyed-in-the-wool blown-in-the-glass one. I am what I am!"

"A darling."

"This is my speed, honey. Up here. Where you can hang out of your window and yell it if you're too tired to go down-stairs and say it. You watch me with this dinge of a flat. You give me seven days, fifteen yards of cretonne and a couple of those Mongolium rugs you read about in the backs of the magazines and I'll show you! This is my real speed up here, Boy. The Bronx, God love it."

"But—"

"Oh, Boy darling, I'm going to find you a steady Saturday night envelop job that will bring you home to some of the good old-fashioned grub I haven't tasted since we left Delancey. I'm going to give you a glimpse of a gefüllte heaven!"

There seemed no way that Slupsky could shake himself free of daze. He kept kissing her through the twitching of his mustache and brushing his eyes as if to rid them of web and letting himself seem to sink into the luxury of her presence.

"Bird, I'm going to work for you. And I'm going to set you up right too. I'm not broke, honey. I've had my ups and downs and you're right, I'm going to settle down. Somehow—I've been a fellow has never been much for getting in with the right crowd. That's all has been wrong with me, Bird. That and getting somebody who cared if—if school kept for me or not."

"I know, Boy! That's what I told them at home tonight while the fur was flying. You've had your name linked with the wrong crowd. That can throw a shadow over any name. You're just one of those sweet boobs without any gumption to fight back. Well, I've got the gumption. I'd like to see any of that gang try to use you as cat's-paw again. I'm here now! I love you for not having any gumption, Boy. It makes you sweet. It's what makes me want to take care of you and see that you get a new start. But just the same I've got it. Gumption. And I'm going to use it for you."

"And you've got everything else, Bird—that is good. If only I had some way of showing you that no matter what I am, you—where you are concerned, Bird, I'm there!"

"Boy, what will you give me if I tell you something? Something sweet about how happy you and me are going to be."

"Give you? Why, Bird—" said Slupsky with a sudden burn of flame along his eyes and his thumb and forefinger fiddling in his waistcoat pocket. "What'll I give you? Nothing I can give you is enough."

"I didn't mean it really—"

"But here. I hadn't meant to give it to you here—now—but—my girl is going to have it like the best of them. That's what I'll give you. There!"

"Why—what! Why, Boy! It's a square diamond. Darling, it's the slickest thing I ever saw. I could fool Morris with it. You running your blessed legs off to dig up a ring for me! Why, honest, Boy, if I didn't know I'd think it was real. It's the finest phony I ever saw. And say, how did you know I like them square! If this isn't the finest phony I ever saw!"

"Why, Bird! Birdie! You don't think I'd bring you a phony wedding present after you've gone and turned life into heaven for me! That's real, Bird. That's a genuine six carat. Six-and-an-eighth, and I wish it was seven."

"You—Boy—that piece of looking-glass—real—can't be—"

"It's real, Bird. Finest money could buy and I only wish it was finer."

"I don't believe it," cried Mrs. Slupsky, and got up and executed a pirouette. A dizzying one that shook the dishes in the basket. "My boy claps a six carat one on my finger just like that! Is that a real one too in your scarf pin, honey? I always thought it was phony. I—I don't care, Boy. I like them and I'm not ashamed who knows it. I like 'em big and I like 'em white and I like 'em plenty. And, oh Boy, but I like them square!"

"And oh, Bird, how I like you happy!"

"What they set you back for this? Boy—you—you—what did this cost?" cried Birdie and wheeled him about toward her suddenly so that the forelock of light tan hair fell down over his eyes. "This ring cost a fortune. Thousands. Where did you get the money, Boy, to pay for this ring?"

For answer Slupsky kissed her, his lips level with hers, but seeming none the less to tiptoe.

"You've got it, darling, haven't you? You should worry how your hubby had to rustle around to do the paying."

"But I—do, Boy. I do."

"Take it while the going is good, girl. There's going to be no more in chunks when hubby settles down."

"Boy! Isadore! You! I know you, Boy. And when I know, I know! If they were to try to frame you for pulling wings off of butterflies and the arms off of babies, I'd know you for the come-clean sweet kid you are! But—but this ring—I'd never ask it out like this—but for the ring. Boy—there's nothing to this frame-up talk that you're under suspicion on all this crook stuff about the bonds? I wouldn't ask it except—the ring! Your hands are clean off—of any of it, I know that. But this ring. This ring cost thousands. Where did you get the money, Boy? Answer me!"

"For the love of God," said Slupsky, with something as canine as a cringe and a snarl to him, "that's a fine question to put up to me on what is practically our wedding night!"

"Oh Isadore!" said Birdie and folded him to her and kissed into his hair and his eyes. "I'm terrible. I am. The thought—just got me all of a sudden by the neck. By the heart. Seeing this ring. What if some of that bond money stuck to my boy—by mistake? Boy—the thought—I'm ashamed—kiss me, Isadore—I'm ashamed—"

"I'm going straight, Bird, from now on, so help me. With you. So help me, Bird, or I want to drop dead right here."

"What do you mean, Boy? From now on? You—Boy—wedding night or no wedding night. Look at me. Where did you get the money to buy this ring?"

"For heaven's sake, don't talk so loud!"

"Where? Isadore! Stop looking at me like that! I—you! All this time, whenever I took up for you—and you never denied it—I took you at your word—only now—as I remember it—there wasn't any word—it was all silence with me putting in the words. What did you mean just now, Isadore, by from now on? Where did you get this ring? Why—are you standing there looking at me like—like that? I can't stand it—Boy—"

"Why, you—Birdie—if a man cannot tell his own wife—"

"Then you—Isadore, you—"

"What has been is, Birdie. The point is, though, now I'm through. The man is not fit to live who couldn't come through clean for a woman like you. If I get out of this, Birdie, and I'm as good as out—may God strike me dead if I'm not through, Birdie—Bird—"

"Isadore," said Birdie and sat down on the bulge of sofa with her hand in a rather dreadful loose sort of drooling fashion along her face, "you mean all that talk in the newspapers—the mention of your name with the rest—that I couldn't even bring myself to mention to you, much less to—to—accuse—you mean you—Isadore, you, you aren't a—a—"

"Why, Birdie, you never thought, even though we never come right out and talked



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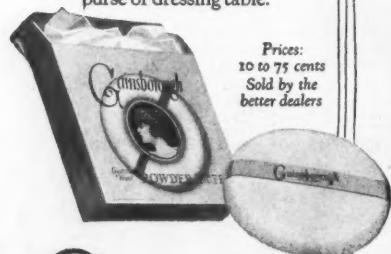
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about it—you never thought I was worth so much as your little finger—"

"But—"

"I'm one of those fellows, Bird, easy-going, easy-make, easy-spend, that will follow the ways of whatever crowd he's caught up with. You know about me, Bird. I was born, it seems to me, and raised, it seems to me, on the streets. I'm what I am, because I guess, honey, I never had anyone cared enough. Why—why, Bird—I thought you knew what kind of a fellow I was. Told you often enough I wasn't fit to lay down and let you walk over me—much less marry you—but when you—you seemed to fall for me—I know I'm not fit to clean your shoes. Bird, I—"

"Then—this ring. Isadore—you're wanted! You're not just under suspicion on account of the company you keep. Isadore, you were in on that bond swipe! You're a thief!"

"Birdie—"

"Don't come near me! Don't touch me! I—let me think. I—I must be crazy. There's something going around—crazy, I tell you, in my head. The way I fought them. Ma. Pa. Morris. From the day I clapped eyes on you—from everything you said—your ways—I was so sure you were only the kind of a good schnookle kid was always getting himself framed. I was so sure. It made me want to take care of you. And now you—you're a thief! I'm married to a thief and this is my wedding celebration."

There was a tearing noise in Birdie's voice and a blanched foreboding look of hysteria smeared into the pallor of her face that made her eyes seem stretched and full of the anguish of one about to scream or remain a little terribly silent.

"Birdie, if I had known you—you—didn't know—I'd have cut off my right hand first."

"I don't believe it, this thing! You're not a thief. You didn't bring me a ring on our marriage night bought with stolen money. You didn't, Boy. Tell me you didn't."

It was no use. Isadore on his knees there beside her, and his lower jaw wagging up and down frantically for words that would not come and Birdie with her stretched imploring eyes looking at the mute and wagging jaw, and then Birdie, who was not given to the capacity for remaining a little terribly silent, began to sob. Great splashes of guttural gutturing noises drawn up from the innards of her.

"Go away! I hate you. I'm not much. Never claimed to be. But I'm honest. I never did a crooked thing in my life. I would have banked my soul on you. Being my kind. A good schnookle that just naturally always got the short end of it, things—"

"Bird—"

"That's why—I've always been that way—when I met you—a sweet kid needing somebody. Why, if you'd been a sick kitten or a lame duck I—I would have loved you. I fell for you because you were a sweet boy and I lifted out my heart and gave it to you, even while the papers were full of the bond scandal, and I didn't care because I didn't believe it. And because I trusted you not to deceive me and now—the second night—what happens? I find myself married to a thief!"

"Birdie—oh—"

"A common ordinary thief. Me, that hates lying and deceit and pretense and low-downness with my very gizzard. Married to a thief! Don't you come near me—"

"Oh, oh—Bird!" said Isadore in a whisper and sat back very quietly on his heels and with the spaces between his features seeming to widen into moors. "Don't say that, Bird!"

"I do say it! I put you before my own flesh and blood. I'm going to take care of my boy, I kept saying, and get him on the right track, and show the world how a boy with the right stuff in him can't be kept down. Some day my folks'll thank me, I kept saying to myself. My boy is of the stuff that will be good to my folks. It'll hurt them in the beginning, but in the end they'll thank me for bringing a sweet and gentle boy into the family. We'll show them some day, I kept saying. And now—and

now—I wish I'd have died before I ever set eyes on you. I wish I had!"

"Birdie, don't say that—you're killing me—let me ex—"

"I will say it. I don't want to hear nothing out of you. I only know I never want to see you again. Something in me has busted. Busted flat. I wish I was dead."

And with that, as her stark face, foreshortened from him, went back against the crazy walnut mill-work back of the couch, Isadore with the moan of a dog went forward with his face in his hands until they touched the floor. It might have been a faint because he remained there so long motionless, his pinch-back coat riding up over his enormously hunched back.

And Birdie, whose tears were big and round and wet and none too beautiful, sat there in her sprawl on the couch, her legs flung so that her heels dug into the floor and her toes pointed up and that stretched stark look in her eyes. It was curious to see them slowly lower toward the hump of Isadore, see them rest there. Fill. Scald. Overflow. Like dried pools with cracked clay bottoms that suddenly, miraculously, were filling.

Birdie flowing back into herself, warmly. "Isadore," cried Mrs. Slupsky, stooping over to catch him by a handful of coat. "You get up! Isadore—Boy—you're not fainting or something? Wake up. Get up. Look, Boy, Look, Isadore. Look at me. Look at Birdie. Papa love mama? Huh—uh—uh stop that crying—you hear me! Mama'll spank—"

"Birdie."

"I knew you were needing me, Boy, but I never knew how much. You thought marriage would soften the law in case it should get you, didn't you?"

"No, Birdie, no. I never thought. I just felt. My love for you."

"You thought anyways, well, with marriage you had nothing to lose. Well, Boy, you didn't, only it's not going to protect you. You're going to pay. You hear. You've been a crook, Isadore, and you're going to pay, marriage or no marriage. You're going to pay up before we can come clean and start over."

"But—"

"Yes, I'm going to stick. And you knew I would! I'm going to stick. And fight back with you. You'll go up for a year or two, I guess, and I'm not going to lie for you to save you from paying up. Boy, you're going up. And I'm going too. And live next door to your little gray house on the hill. I never knew, Boy, my poor Boy, my darling Boy, how much you did need me. You've been framed all right, honey. But we're going to stage the greatest comeback this old town ever saw. Me and you, Boy. Together."

"I could lay down my life for you this minute, Bird, and thank God for the chance, that's how I'm going to make good for you. I don't care how you manage it—how you punish me—just so—just so you—don't quit on me, Bird. That—would finish me. Don't quit on me, Bird."

"Don't, Boy," said Birdie with her hand clapped over his mouth and her cheek against that. "Don't. Don't. Don't be so meek to me. I can't stand your ever being meek to me. Just sweet. Not meek. I failed you a minute ago, Boy—"

"No, Bird, no."

"It was the shock did it. But I'll never stop making it up to you for that. You've got to go through with your punishment. I won't help to save you from that. But I'll never stop standing by, Boy."

"Nothing else matters then, Bird. Nothing—else—"

For the first time in a life consistently lacking in it, a certain dignity had come to old man Fish. It had come to him in what was to be his last illness.

He had passed out in such eclipse from the grotesque little jumping-jack man of the busy little beard of waggle due to haggle, into the little old Havana-scented figure of quiescent

goatee, that had used to drowse the hours in the brace of sunny windows.

From his bed of final reckoning, Italian late seventeenth century, linen-fold design, Tewkington-Barr sale, there was something unexpectedly long in the lay of him under the coverings, sedate to the ridge of him; and the short pointy beard had a lay to it that was portentous. Even a little magnificent. Julius Goldfish was going grandly home.

It was a sedative sick-room of lowered shade, lowered lamp and noiseless placing of objects by a nurse who creaked slightly of starch.

It was a sedative sick-room, except for the thumping, stricken figure of Mrs. Fish in her chair beside the bed. Even in her silence the beating throat above the ceramic brooch of her husband seemed to make a throbbing note like the beat of a dove. A hurt dove. With her poor little terrified eyes and the constant heaving of her small puffy bosom and her crouching into the Savonarola chair as if it were an eave, that was Mrs. Fish for you. A hurt dove.

"Papa, papa, darlink. Won't you please talk to me? To one of us? It's mama. Julius, it's your Tilda. Papa, please—it's mama."

The hours of it. That word "papa." Whole hordes of the puffy little noun crowding up the room like so many of those softy pods that pop when you press them on the vine.

"Papa. Papa. Papa."

The nurse at her endless tiptoeing and noiseless placing of the objects. The endless days. The endless nights. The endless rigmarole of the sick-room.

"Papa, darlink. Papa, won't you even say hello to Morris? Look, he's brought you a silk-lined dressing-gown you should wear it all ways on the wrong side, when you get up. Papa, look! Here is Reenie. She's brought you some calves-foot jelly. Papa, here's Irma and the babies. Papa, papa, don't you got no more any interest in any of us? Morris, how long those doctors sit there on their consultation! You don't think, son, papa has got something maybe more serious as we know about?"

"No, mother. Once we get his blood pressure down, I hope we'll have him up in no time."

"Reenie, ain't it terrible? Papa don't take no interest in us. It don't seem like papa he should lay there so—so tired of us all."

"Poor darling," said Mrs. Silk, who rouged her lips and whitened her cheeks and who also dripped finger nails like ruby cabochons and attended with her sister-in-law Irma Fish, fashionable Friday morning musicales, in tan duveteen, blue fox, trotteur hat with a brim that was kindly to profile, and impeccable curve of bobbed hair. "Poor darling. We'll know more after the doctors have consulted. I don't agree with Morris. It seems to me father's anemic. Low blood pressure or something like that."

"O God!" said Mrs. Fish and sat rocking herself in the straight-backed Savonarola. "Maybe it's a worse sickness than any of us realize. It's a week now since papa ain't spoke ten words to any of us. Just turned his back like it was on life. Why don't they hurry out from that room? Morris, you don't think papa's got anything—bad?"

"Listen, dear, that is why we have called in the best doctors that money can buy to determine for us. I doubt if there is anything more serious than just a general let-down with father."

"Let-down is right. It ain't natural such a busy man like papa should all of a sudden have been let down from business."

"I've been telling father for years he eats too much rich food," said Mrs. Silk.

"Yes, take away yet what little pleasure papa has got left. It's better, Reenie, papa should have a little pressure from his blood than have to put up with such empty looking clear soups like you send him and such jelly from calves' feet. Papa likes something what has got a stick to it to his ribs, like my lentil soup or a little spetzel with browned crumbs."

"Glue with browned crumbs you mean,



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mother. That's what coarse rich foods like that amount to."

"One thing I always must say for your sister Birdie, Reenie. Birdie with all her faults had such sympathy for what papa liked. You think it was ever too much for her on his birthday to take herself down by Hester Street market for blintzes for him—you—"

"Now, mother . . ."

"If you muzzle me for it, I can mention my own child's name when her papa is sick. I don't say it ain't a disgrace to us. God knows I have suffered my share with the trouble she has brought on us, but when her papa is so sick—suppose something should happen—with Birdie up there in Auburn living next door to the prison. Suppose without our letting her know it, something should happen to papa! I think we should send for Birdie!"

"That's fine sick-room psychology, mother. To confront a sick man with some one who will only call up a dreadful situation before him. Here come the doctors. Now, mother dear, we must all be brave."

It was a brief telling. Old man Fish was dying. Pernicious anemia was the professional saying of it. The rivers of his blood were running white. It was as if it was part of the fading out of old man Fish. The paling of the blood.

And with her eyes like two scars in her head and her lips scabs because her mouth and throat had gone dry, an old woman turned back to the bed and cried in dreadful sounds.

"Papa. Papa. Papa. My darling. It's mama. Can't you wake up, papa, a minute? Morris is here and he wants maybe when you get well you should set yourself up in such a little furniture business again, only farther up-town. Morris—son—am I right?"

"Yes, mother. Father, I've had it in my mind for some time now. A little plan so the time won't hang quite so heavy, father. Won't you try to rouse yourself?"

"Papa, please! Morris is sorry. And Reenie. Look at Reenie. She wants you should get well and one night go over to her house for supper for the kind you like. No more such fanciness like shirt-fronts—Reenie wants you should come like it's comfortable for you. Not, Reenie?"

"Father. Father dear. Try, dear, and rouse yourself enough to look at us. I want to tell you about a little party, father, I'm planning for just us. Just you and mother, and the children aren't going to be put to bed before you arrive and mother is coming over and drive my cook out of the kitchen and prepare every single dish for you herself and there won't be a butler to serve, only mother—and and me, and you can kiss the children all you want, father, no matter what their old *bonne* says, and, father—father, can't you rouse yourself to look at us—all of us here—dear—"

And then old man Fish did open an eye. An old eye. A tired eye. A dreary eye, and lusterless.

"I want my Birdie," he said and a tear squeezed out of the crinkle that was a lid.

"Oh, my God, papa! You want your Birdie. Of course your Birdie. Right away, darling, we will get Birdie. Morris—right away—where can we get Birdie?"

"Why, I—I don't know exactly where she's living. Somewhere in Auburn. I—"

"Then call up the prison. Right away quick. Long distance. You hear me? Right away quick. Your papa wants Birdie. It's her place she should be home. It ain't for two and a half weeks more he gets free. She is still there in Auburn. Call up the jail . . ."

"Mother, not so loud."

"You hear me? Right away quick. Long distance. It is no time now you should have time to think anything except your papa wants his Birdie. Yes, papa—yes, darling—Birdie is coming!"

At three o'clock that afternoon, by a miracle she was never quite clear enough about to explain, that of accomplishing a five-hour journey in four, Birdie, who must have been crying in splotches all over her face in the train,

just as Birdie would do it, burst into the room of the Heppelwhite that she had not entered since the twelvemonth before when she had flogged herself out of it.

A paler Birdie and even a trifle wan Birdie, but in the same black satin dress that climbed so and clung so about her legs. A breathless, gargly Birdie who sobbed as she entered.

"Mama—mama—how is he? Don't tell me he—he—"

"No, no, Birdie. No, no, darling—papa's awful sick but—but not—that—"

"Thank God!" said Birdie and began to cry in wet splashes. "I've been so afraid. What if I hadn't got here—in time—to see him! My papa. My poor little papa. Let me see him. Morris—Reenie—ain't it terrible? Our papa. He wants to see me. Oh—he should ask to see me and I wasn't right here on the spot when he wanted it!"

"Sh-h-h, Birdie. You must compose yourself before you go in. We dare not excite him."

"Of course, Morris. I'll try. Give me your handkerchief. I wouldn't cry before him—I wouldn't cry before him if it bursts my heart in two not to. Give me some powder, Reenie. That's only the hem of my skirt dragging. I had to jump off a platform for a going train. Cut it off with your penknife, Morrie. Mama, tell me what did papa say when he asked for me? That's nothing but a little bruise where I landed on that train. It'll stop bleeding. I kept thinking on the train, mama, and it nearly killed me—you—you remember that time, mama—he—papa—that time Morrie and me had the chicken-pox and—and he—papa was so full of rheumatism that winter and—he walked that night to—to get us lollypops six blocks in the rain for the red ones we liked—and caught the lumbago so terrible—"

"Birdie—don't. I can't stand it. I can't stand it you should go back to those days when papa was himself—"

"I didn't mean to. I'm ready now, mama, to—to go in. Stop crying now, Reenie and Morrie. I'm going in now to papa. I want him to see us all smiling. Now all of you!"

You never saw the like of the Birdie that entered that sick-room then. There was a swagger to that Birdie. Swagger and an old way she had of smiling with one eye screwed and an old funniness of hers of coming into the house with her neck and her knees doing an in-and-out turtle's motion.

"Hello, pops!" said Birdie and stood over the bed grinning down, kissing down, her voice at its huskiest and rustiest. "It's me, pops. Bird. How's every little thing? How are you feeling, pops? Rotten?"

Old man Fish opened his eyes then. "Birdie," he said and began to cry; not with tears; just with the motion his throat made; and he tried to fumble to get his hand out from the bed coverings and to feel for baby.

"Birdie. Unbeshriest! Baby-sha!"

"Look at him, mama. I thought you told me he wasn't feeling so well. Look at his color. If he looked any better, I'll bet he couldn't stand it. Papa, how do you get that way? You should have the nerve to lay there and say you're sick. In that Eytalian bedstead I'll bet he feels like Julius Caesar instead of Julius Goldfish."

"Ach, Birdie, you can laugh. I'm a sick man, Birdie. I got in my arms and my legs such a bearing-down pains, I don't wish it to a dog he should have them."

"Father, that's just weakness."

"Hush, Morris, don't you see papa wants to talk only with Birdie?"

Not once did old man Fish waver his glance from Birdie.

"I'm an old man, Birdie. They let me get into an old man before my time, from not having enough in my life to make it worth while I should want to live on. I got good children, Birdie, but I been lonesome for my business—Birdie—for you—"

"Say, papa, don't I know? Just you wait! I've got plans up my sleeve."

"I got pains, Birdie, when I so much as try even to lift my little finger."

"Say, papa, who should I meet on the street just now. You'll never guess. I give you three!"

"How should a sick man on his back know?" "Shammas Gerstle! Shammas Gerstle and his Mannie. You remember the big-eared second boy—that stuttered?"

"Birdie, papa is too sick for such nonsense. Anyways, Shammas Gerstle died already two months ago."

"You don't say so, you met Shammas Gerstle!" said old man Fish, never wavering in his hazy effort to concentrate. "Shammas Gerstle. It's five years since I laid eyes on him—is he still in the Ludlow Street *Schule*?"

"I—papa, I—"

"Shammas Gerstle. He was a good friend I had to turn to, Birdie, while my family was growing up. He coached Morris for his *Bar Mitsvah*. It ain't nice how we got away from our old friends like the Shammas."

"You ought to see, papa, Mannie's ears. You remember how they used to wag. Well, now they flag trains. And, papa, I was thinking yesterday of something that made me laugh. Honest, I had to laugh right out loud. Remember old lady Gerstle, every time she smelt from next door we were having maybe a sauerkraut and boiled beef supper, like mama used to make, right away she used to send over Mannie who loved it so much, to waggle his ears for us children."

"Sauerkraut with boiled beef! I ain't had it in my mouth since—"

"You want some, Julius? It's only that we got restrictions in an apartment like this from noisy cooking that smells that we haven't had it. Right away when you get well and can eat again, we—"

The unswerving gaze of old man Fish. "So you talked with the Shammas, Birdie?"

"And, papa, I was thinking yesterday—just thinking back over things the way you do—remember—remember how one night when Reenie got her leg stuck in the fire-escape, you were so mad that while we had to send for the hook-and-ladder company to get her out, and were waiting, you started to spank her right there while she was caught in the rung and mama got mad and stood behind spanking you and by the time the hook-and-ladder came all Delancey was standing in the courtyard watching the Goldfishes spank each other."

It was as if the old lips of her father bent upwards then like a bit of rusty barrel hoop. And believe it or not, but old man Fish's beard was wagging, wagging so that the thin ridge of him under the covers shook and the tears, the tears of his laughter ran out of the corners of his eyes; and when between waggles old man Fish could find voice, the talk it danced on something like this:

"And remember, Birdie . . ."

"Do I! And remember, pops . . . when we moved up-town and mama cried so when we sold her old brass bed to old pirate Glauber . . ."

"Will you ever forget, Birdie, how Weintraub every *shabbath*—used to . . ."

"Don't make me laugh so, papa . . . and say, pop, will you ever forget the night you were all down on the front stoop to see me pass the house in my pink tissue paper dress, leading the East Side Girls' Papoose Club parade, and Meyer Weintraub turned the water plug on me and . . ."

And so on and so on to the wagging of old man Fish's beard and heaving laughter of him under the coverlets.

There never was so curious a death scene. It was a laughing death scene. Old man Fish laughing himself to death, surrounded by family laughing with him their tears of hysteria.

Literally, it can be said that when the old man finally breathed out he did it on a convulsion. Of merriment.

Not the heartick laughter of those about him, but the deep inner merriment of one who, laughing last, laughed best.

The odor of funeral still lay. A warmish

sweetishness with a humidity to it. A harp-shaped floral piece of roses and calla-lilies had somehow remained back and stood like an easel on the piano.

Poor Mrs. Fish. Dried out. Not a sniffle left. Lax in a chair there with her mouth and her eyes and her hands dry and open.

"Mother, won't you lie down? Morris, make your mother try to rest."

"Come, mother, Irma is right. You need sleep, dear."

"I got no rest—no more, children—with papa—gone."

"Mother dear, listen. Why don't you come right away now with Morris and me? Home. You don't ever need to come back to this apartment and its memories. Our car is at the door. Morris and I want you to come to us. Our home is yours."

"I can't realize it, children. Your papa gone—"

"Now, mother, don't sit brooding. Irma and Morris are right. You are going out of this apartment today for good. We aren't going to quarrel over who shall have you, mother. But my car is at the door too, and you don't need Irving and me to tell you that the best room our home has to offer is yours. Mother dear, you mustn't sit looking like that. So stricken. Isn't it something, dear, to have children with you?"

"My children. What would I do without my children? My boy. My Reenie. My Birdie. Where is Birdie? Birdie—come out from fooling in the back of the house. Birdie!"

"Yes, ma."

There entered Birdie then, with the red rims to her eyes making her look actually spectacled, and lugging a patent leather suitcase and a great clumsy something in newspaper under her arm and an old Paisley shawl over her elbow and her hat on the back of her head.

"Birdie, where are you going?"

"Home, ma."

"Home?" from Maurice Fish.

Mrs. Slupsky cocked the glance of surprise at her brother.

"Darlink, since when this interest in my movements? It is the first direct question I've been honored with. Sorry I haven't any calling cards with me. Try to remember the address. We're renewing the lease on the old family mansion, Brother Goldfish. Four-fifty-nine South Simpson Street, the Bronx! Isadore, Brother Goldfish, has been away on an extended tour and is expected home this day week. He has learned during his extended sojourn of twelve months in Auburn—not-on-Hudson, the gentle art of automobile engineering and expects to enter his new profession shortly after his return!"

"You mean—"

"I mean," said Mrs. Slupsky, her words suddenly rapid-fire buckshot, "that Isadore is coming home with a trade and I have already landed him a job. We are asking nothing of anybody. You can take us or leave us. My year of working in an Auburn tea room, waitressing—yes, Irma, don't get seasick—and living two blocks from the prison, has taught me this much. About the loneliest road any man can travel is the road back. The road back from down and out. Well, me and Izzy have traveled it. And we're back, all right. No favors asked."

"Birdie—"

"Only remember if any member of this family is coming up to the South Simpson Street family mansion to call on mama, I want it understood that my husband is a member of that household as much as any of us, and I won't have him humiliated! Et cetera. Noblesse oblige; toot sweet. Or which every one of them means, put that in your pipe and smoke it! Come on, ma!"

"Why—what do you mean by—by come on, ma? Come on, ma, where?"

"Where? Why, Reenie darlink, to the aforementioned old family mansion. I'm going to give ma what we call the standing-room. It's only big enough for two things. You got to stand or lay. By the time Mr. Slupsky gets



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home next week, that little two by four is going to be transformed into the original cretonne and wicker-rocker bird nest of the back of the magazines. I—"

"Mother is coming to us. She is going to divide her time between Morris and me."

"You don't tell me so!" said Mrs. Slupsky. "You mean it's a choosing party? Mama, maybe I should have talked things over with you first."

"Maybe you should," said Mrs. Silk dryly. "Get your hat, mother dear. The car is at the door. Birdie can come down to the house sometime and then we will talk things over."

"Go get your hat, mother dear, nothing! Come get your shawl, mother dear, the subway is running. I've your old Paisley here over my arm for you. Hats make headaches on old ladies who weren't used to them from home. Don't bother about anything, mama. I'll come back here and get your things later."

"Mother, you—"
 "After all," said Mrs. Maurice Fish, with the coolest and the clearest little tinkle to her words, "mother is entitled to make her choice, dears."

"You don't mind, do you, mama, to carry that newspaper package? It's not heavy. It's that nicked Della Robby placque Morrie gave me once from some wop sale. I found a place for it over a stove-pipe hole."

"Morrie—Reenie—my children—if you don't care—I—been so long a goldfish out of water, I—children—please?"

"That's all you got to carry, ma, the placque—and say, ma, could you tuck this up under your shawl? It's your hot-water bottle, that old red one you like for your sciatica. I can lug these all right. We could take a Bronx express up, but the local is better because I want to stop at Blatz's Fish Market and get a miltz so you can *gedaemste* it for supper."

The face of old woman Goldfish. It came out from the wimple of her shawl as vivid as a moon. The atavistic look of a woman backed by whole centuries of women who have known how to tear the entrails from fish.

"Reenie and Morris—my children—you'll come often to see us—me—Birdie and Isadore—"

The clatter of them lugging out through the hallway. Birdie and her mother. Going home.

The Love Nest (Continued from page 55)

guest readily. "It's a wonderful place!"

"We like it. I mean it suits us. I mean it's my ideal of a real home. And Celia calls it her love nest."

"So she told me," said Bartlett.
 "She'll always be sentimental," said her husband.

He put his hand on her shoulder, but she drew away.

"I must run up and dress," she said.
 "Dress!" exclaimed Bartlett, who had been dazzled by her flowered green chiffon.

"Oh, I'm not going to really dress," she said.
 "But I couldn't wear this thing for dinner!"

"Perhaps you'd like to clean up a little, Bartlett," said Gregg. "I mean Forbes will show you your room if you want to go up."

"It might be best," said Bartlett.

Celia, in a black lace dinner gown, was rather quiet during the elaborate meal. Three or four times when Gregg addressed her, she seemed to be thinking of something else and had to ask, "What did you say, sweetheart?" Her face was red and Bartlett imagined that she had "sneaked" a drink or two besides the two helpings of Bourbon and the cocktail that had preceded dinner.

"Well, I'll leave you," said Gregg when they were in the living-room once more. "I mean the sooner I get started, the sooner I'll be back. Sweetheart, try and keep your guest awake and don't let him die of thirst. *Au revoir*, Bartlett. I'm sorry, but it can't be helped. There's a fresh bottle of the Bourbon, so go to it. I mean help yourself. It's too bad you have to drink alone."

"It is too bad, Mr. Bartlett," said Celia when Gregg had gone.

"What's too bad?" asked Bartlett.

"That you have to drink alone. I feel like I wasn't being a good hostess to let you do it. In fact, I refuse to let you do it. I'll join you in just a little wee sip."

"But it's so soon after dinner!"

"It's never too soon! I'm going to have a drink myself and if you don't join me, you're a quitter."

She mixed two life-sized high-balls and handed one to her guest.

"Now we'll turn on the radio and see if we can't stir things up. There! No, no! Who cares about the old baseball! Now! This is better! Let's dance."

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Gregg, but I don't dance."
 "Well, you're an old cheese! To make me dance alone! 'All alone, yes, I'm all alone.'"

There was no affectation in her voice now and Bartlett was amazed at her unlabored grace as she glided around the big room.

"But it's no fun alone," she complained.

"Let's shut the — thing off and talk."

"I love to watch you dance," said Bartlett.
 "Yes, but I'm no Pavlova," said Celia as she silenced the radio. "And besides, it's time for a drink."

"I've still got more than half of mine."
 "Well, you had that wine at dinner, so I'll have to catch up with you."

She poured herself another high-ball and went at the task of "catching up."

"The trouble with you, Mr.—now isn't that a scream! I can't think of your name."

"Bartlett."

"The trouble with you, Barker—do you know what's the trouble with you? You're too sober. See? You're too—sober! That's the whole trouble, see? If you weren't so sober, we'd be better off. See? What I can't understand is how you can be so sober and me so high."

"You're not used to it."

"Not used to it! That's the cat's pajamas! Say, I'm like this half the time, see? If I wasn't, I'd die!"

"What does your husband say?"

"He don't say because he don't know. See, Barker? There's nights when he's out and there's a few nights when I'm out myself. And there's other nights when we're both in and I pretend I'm sleepy and I go up-stairs. See? But I don't go to bed. See? I have a little party all by myself. See? If I didn't, I'd die!"

"What do you mean, you'd die?"

"You're dumb, Barker! You may be sober, but you're dumb! Did you fall for all that apple sauce about the happy home and the contented wife? Listen, Barker—I'd give anything in the world to be out of this mess. I'd give anything to never see him again."

"Don't you love him any more? Doesn't he love you? Or what?"

"Love! I never did love him! I didn't know what love was! And all his love is for himself!"

"How did you happen to get married?"

"I was a kid; that's the answer. A kid and ambitious. See? He was a director then and he got stuck on me and I thought he'd make me a star. See, Barker? I married him to get myself a chance. And now look at me!"

"I'd say you were fairly well off."

"Well off, am I? I'd change places with the scum of the earth just to be free! See, Barker? And I could have been a star without any help if I'd only realized it. I had the looks and I had the talent. I've got it yet. I could be a Swanson and get myself a marquis; maybe a prince! And look what I did get! A self-satisfied, self-centered—! I thought he'd

make me! See, Barker? Well, he's made me all right; he's made me a chronic mother and it's a wonder I've got any looks left.

"I fought at first. I told him marriage didn't mean giving up my art, my life work. But it was no use. He wanted a beautiful wife and beautiful children for his beautiful home. Just to show us off. See? I'm part of his chattels. See, Barker? I'm just like his big diamond or his cars or his horses. And he wouldn't stand for his wife 'lowering' herself to act in pictures. Just as if pictures hadn't made him!

"You go back to your magazine tomorrow and write about our love nest. See, Barker? And be sure and don't get mixed and call it a baby ranch. Babies! You thought little Norma was pretty. Well, she is. And what is it going to get her? A rich — of a husband that treats her like a —! That's what it'll get her if I don't interfere. I hope I don't last long enough to see her grow up, but if I do, I'm going to advise her to run away from home and live her own life. And be somebody! Not a thing like I am! See, Barker?"

"Did you ever think of a divorce?"

"Did I ever think of one! Listen—but there's no chance. I've got nothing on him, and no matter what he had on me, he'd never let the world know it. He'd keep me here and torture me like he does now, only worse. But I haven't done anything wrong, see? The men I might care for, they're all scared of him and his money and power. See, Barker? And the others are just as bad as him. Like fat old Morris, the hotel man, that everybody thinks he's a model husband. The reason he don't step out more is because he's too stingy. But I could have him if I wanted him. Every time he gets near enough to me, he squeezes my hand. I guess he thinks it's a nickel, the tight old —! But come on, Barker. Let's have a drink. I'm running down."

"I think it's about time you were running up—stairs," said Bartlett. "If I were you, I'd try to be in bed and asleep when Gregg gets home."

"You're all right, Barker. And after this drink I'm going to do just as you say. Only I thought of it before you did, see? I think of it lots of nights. And tonight you can help me out by telling him I had a bad headache."

Left alone, Bartlett thought a while, then read, and finally dozed off. He was dozing when Gregg returned.

"Well, well, Bartlett," said the great man, "did Celia desert you?"

"It was perfectly all right, Mr. Gregg. She had a headache and I told her to go to bed."

"She's had a lot of headaches lately; reads too much, I guess. Well, I'm sorry I had this date. It was about a new golf club and I had to be there. I mean I'm going to be president of it. I see you consoled yourself with some of the Bourbon. I mean the bottle doesn't look as full as it did."

"I hope you'll forgive me for helping myself so generously," said Bartlett. "I don't get stuff like that every day!"

"Well, what do you say if we turn in? We can talk on the way to town tomorrow. Though I guess you won't have much to ask me. I guess you know all about us. I mean you know all about us now."

"Yes, indeed, Mr. Gregg. I've got plenty of material if I can just handle it."

Celia had not put in an appearance when Gregg and his guest were ready to leave the house next day.

"She always sleeps late," said Gregg. "I mean she never wakes up very early. But she's later than usual this morning. Sweetheart!" he called up the stairs.

"Yes, sweetheart," came the reply.

"Mr. Bartlett's leaving now. I mean he's going."

"Oh, good-by, Mr. Bartlett. Please forgive me for not being down to see you off."

"You're forgiven, Mrs. Gregg. And thanks for your hospitality."

"Good-by, sweetheart!"

"Good-by, sweetheart!"



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"A Swell Affair"

The House of Orme (Continued from page 79)

as possible for him, a hot bath waiting and a good dinner. Because maybe that would make him feel kinder and give him the courage to go to work and live all this trouble down. It's the sinners that need to feel that people are willing to help them."

"He won't want to stick around here. If he goes away somewhere, will you go with him?"

"I'd have to do whatever he wanted me to do."

"It would be lonesome without you."

Nora shifted uneasily among her pillows.

"I'd think," said Jimmy, "that David would go plumb crazy with what he's had to put up with. Is it ever right, ma'am, to wish that somebody was dead? Every night I wish and wish that when I wake up in the morning old man Orme'll be dead. What good is he?"

"We can't be the judge of that, Jimmy. If God didn't think he ought to live, why, I suppose he'd die. God must have His own good reasons for everything that He does."

Jimmy, who had seen more life at first hand than Nora had, was tempted to say, "Oh shucks!" But what he did say, and very reverently, was "Yes, ma'am."

All the time they talked they could hear the far-off blows of David's ax falling steadily and without intermission. Once Jimmy called attention to this.

"Once David tackles somethin'," he said, "he don't never let up. He won't take breath till that ol' pine, and it ain't no chicken of a pine, comes down. It's the same with everythin' that has to be done. I never see such a feller for work. And it don't get him nowhere, and it don't draw him no pay."

"Yes, it does, I think," said Nora. "Every time he does something well and with all his might, never complaining or asking questions, there's another piece of gold stuck somewhere on his character."

"His character must weigh about a million tons, then," said Jimmy, "because it was all gold to start with, and true blue."

Nora laughed. "We're getting our metaphors mixed," she said. "Either metaphors or colors. But David is true blue just the same, and his character is all gold."

"It's funny," said Jimmy, "that there'd be two brothers so different. One dark and kind o' fiery, and one light-complected and cool. I never seen David get mad yet. But I bet if he ever did he'd be terrible. I wouldn't want to be around."

The sound of the chopping ceased suddenly, and there was borne to their ears a kind of creaking and whining and snapping that became a long-drawn-out roar and terminated in a crash.

"That's my factory whistle," said Jimmy. "I promised David if he'd cut the tree down I'd clean off the branches. Then we'll both chop the trunk into lengths and help each other split 'em."

A minute or two later David joined them, his face red and wet with exertion. "Your turn, Jimmy," he cried cheerfully.

"While you were chopping," said Nora, "did your ears burn?"

"Why," said David, "I believe they did!"

"It was because Jimmy and I were saying nice things about you."

"About me?" David grinned like a boy.

"We sure did, didn't we, Jimmy?"

Jimmy nodded, and presently and with a certain reluctance moved off in the direction of the fallen tree. The sounds of Jimmy's chopping were very different from those of David's. Furious spells of chopping followed slow and fitful spells, and there were silences between.

"Jimmy and I've been talking about when Brant gets out of prison," said Nora. "I've been afraid that maybe he'd get out a few days sooner than we expect and we wouldn't be ready to welcome him. I think we ought to have a hot bath ready for him, and nice clean clothes and a good dinner. I think we ought

to make him feel that we are glad he's home and mean to stand by him."

David felt a keen disappointment and a sinking of his spirit. "Why, Nora," he said, "I thought I gave you something very different to think about. Then you don't mean to take the seed and Jimmy—"

"I've thought about all that, David. And I made up my mind that I'd do whatever you thought was right for me to do."

"I think," said David with vehemence, "that it would be right for you to run from that man to the world's end and to jump off that if he still followed you."

"And I wonder," said Nora, "if that is what you really do think is right."

"How so?"

"Supposing, David, that you were a girl, and that a man came along and you thought he'd make you a good husband, and that you liked him well enough to marry him. And suppose you believed in religion, and stood up and gave your solemn word of honor that you'd make that man a good wife to the best of your ability. And then suppose right away afterwards you found out that instead of being brave and loving and honorable, he was just a man that liked women and was greedy and—and a thief, and that it just didn't seem as if you could bear to let him touch you—what would you do? Remember, you'd promised to be a good wife to him. What would you do?"

"I'd cut and run," said David, "so help me, Nora, I'd cut and run."

"You? You would? You make me laugh. Why don't you cut and run? Do you think your old father is any less a ruin of a man than Brant? Why don't you run away from him? Why don't you take the seed and go out into the world and make your fortune, and leave your old blind father to grope about the house shouting your name, and hunting for food and care, until he starves to death? So don't tell me what you'd do if you were in my place. You'd stick. You'd say Brant is a bad man and a bad husband, but he's my man and my husband and I've got to stand by."

"Nora," said David lamely, "the world's got round to a point where a woman doesn't need to feel herself under the same obligations as a man does."

"Nonsense," said Nora, "and you know it's nonsense. I have known you too well not to know what you would do in my place. The reason that I am going to stand by my husband, David, is because I admire you so much, and because I long to be like you."

For a long time David did not say anything. The thought that on a day not distant, and approaching at the gallop, Brant would return and claim Nora was almost intolerable to him. He loved her with all his heart and soul. Her decision to be quixotic in doing right would have been his own decision, and he loved her the more for it.

"Honey," he said, "I wouldn't want for you to do anything that you could ever reproach yourself with. I would like to see you run away from your duty. But if you did I could never think so highly of you."

Nearly every day one or other of the men who guarded the convicts found it possible to accept David's hospitality and drink his whisky. During the period of torrential rains David visited the camp. Brant was relieved of his chains for the occasion and allowed to walk out of ear-shot with his brother, but of course not out of sight. They stood in the shelter of a holly tree, Brant very quiet and reserved, David nervous and ill at ease. He did not know how to say what he had come to say.

"I ought to tell you, Brant," he said finally, "that I've done my best to persuade Nora to go away and not have anything more to do with you."

"I can always count on you to do the friendly, unselfish thing," said Brant icily.

David shrugged his shoulders. "But she won't go," he said. "She says that she's your

wife. And that she took you for better or worse and has got to stick by you."

"I am afraid," said Brant, "that wifely duty is not the only thing which keeps my wife at Orme."

"You don't know your wife, Brant. There is no other reason."

"Anyone with an ounce of brains, Davie, can read you like an open book—like a primer. You can't speak Nora's name without telling the world that you are in love with her."

The two brothers looked each other squarely in the eyes for one moment. Presently David, speaking gently and slowly, said:

"Being in love with a woman isn't a sin, Brant. I have never told her. It is my misfortune that I am in love with her—and nothing else."

"And I suppose it is also your misfortune that she is in love with you? I've had more than one woman in love with me in my time; but unless she was ugly I never called it a misfortune. And now what other pleasant news have you for me? Nora and you are in love with each other and so she won't go away from Orme. What else? But if there isn't any other news, you must let me congratulate you. You are greatly to be envied. I can imagine a peculiar zest about making love in the presence of an old man who can neither see nor hear."

"You never believed any good of anyone, Brant. But some instinct ought to tell you, even if the years of our growing up together tell you nothing, that I am incapable of making love to another man's wife. As for Nora, she has a resolute and honorable heart. And if I knew that she cared for me I would be unhappier than I am. I came to ask what you intend to do when—when this wretched time is over. I wish you would tell me so that I can help you in any way that is possible. For Nora's sake I want by-gones to be by-gones between you and me. I would like to be friends with you, Brant, and to help you."

"And in what way," said Brant, "for the sake of argument, would it be possible for you to help me? I don't see you helping yourself along in the world very fast."

"If you and Nora will stay at Orme and take care of father—"

"I? Stay at Orme after what has happened! I will cross the threshold of that house twice more. Once to enter and possess what is mine. And once to take her away where you will never see her or hear of her again!"

"In that event," said David calmly, "I can show you a quick road to fortune, if after the lessons you have had you can find in you somewhere the resolution and manliness to take it."

It was in his mind to offer Brant his only treasure—the cotton seed. But he was not given the opportunity.

"But if I find," said Brant with sudden rage and vehemence, "that you have lied to me, and I think that I shall so find, I shall give myself the satisfaction of killing you both."

"You will find," said David, and he also spoke hotly, "that you have had as always a consideration which you never once in your life deserved."

"Conversing with you in the rain," said Brant, "is not my ideal of a good time. On the whole I prefer my nigger and the shackle which attaches me to him."

He moved a step toward the camp, stopped as if hit by a sudden thought, and faced about.

"By the way," he said, "I shall need money when I get out. And it will be as well if you and Nora between you find a way to raise me some."

He turned away once more and stalked through an open space of rain to the camp.

To the horror which David experienced at the thought of Brant's home-coming, fear was now added. This fear of course was not for himself, but for Nora. A man of Brant's perverse and often furious moods, fresh from the indignities of six months at hard labor, and goaded by his own imaginings into a savage state of jealousy, would be capable of anything—of assault or even murder. David

wondered what he would do if in his presence Brant should strike Nora. He wondered if it would be possible to refrain from killing him. When the gentle do strike they strike hard.

David returned to Orme, and as well as he could answered Nora's questions as to what had taken place at his interview.

"What does he intend to do when he is free?"

"To come here and take you away. He says that he will need money. I have none."

"I have a few hundred dollars," said Nora; "he's welcome to that. But did you tell him your scheme? For Brant and me to stay here and let you have your chance?"

"He wouldn't listen. He never would listen to reason. But there's no use thinking about it. I'll have to stay with father. With a few hundred dollars and the cotton seed you and Brant won't have anything to fear—except Brant's impatience and cocksureness."

"I won't have you giving the seed to Brant. He would probably throw it from the first bridge into the first river, just to spite himself."

"I've got to do the best I can for him," said David, "and what has happened may possibly have knocked some sense into him."

"Will he have to serve his full term?"

"He won't be discharged any earlier for good conduct. I think that we can be sure of that."

"What else did you talk about? Did he say anything about me?"

"Oh, he talks," said David, "for the sake of talking. He doesn't mean all that he says. He always enjoyed making me as uncomfortable as he could. There was talk of that kind, but it isn't worth repeating. He likes to accuse me of things which I honestly think I am incapable of doing. He made me so mad that I almost wished they'd given him life instead of six months. But I don't wish that. What I do wish is that his shadow had never fallen across your path."

"But if it hadn't, David, I would never have known you. I would never have had the fun of dressing up in all the beautiful old dresses. I would never have seen Orme in the moonlight."

"Those are small requirements," said David. "They are not," said Nora. "To have known a man all of whose thoughts and impulses are noble and self-sacrificing has given me the strength and the patience that I will need. Even if we never meet again after Brant takes me away, I shall never lose the little goodness that I have caught like a fever from the great goodness that is in you. There. I had to say all that sometime."

She had said "all that," and she had said more too. She had told him as plainly as possible that she loved him. And they were both tremulous with emotion.

She moved a little towards the door, smiled at him, and said, "I read somewhere once, David, that renunciation is the bread of life and the wine."

It is probable that for a moment or two any truly noble act is its own reward. In renouncing the woman he loved and who loved him, David experienced an extraordinary exaltation of the spirit. Almost, for a short time, it seemed as if he were in love with suffering. And then he underwent a very natural revulsion.

He made the sudden and inevitable, but in his case belated, discovery that he was made of flesh and blood. It might be noble for Nora to stick by Brant, and it might be noble to give them his blessing and see them go out of his life, but it wouldn't be human. The human thing was to want Nora for himself, and to scheme and contrive so that he should so have her.

He had the impulse to take Nora for his own and to hold her against the world. Let Brant come home to find the doors and shutters of Orme all closed and bolted. Let him pound and rave and shoot bullets through them if he liked.

He would have to tire of that after a time and go away.

For entertaining such wild, unlawful thoughts David hated himself. But the

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thoughts came uninvited and made themselves at home. As much as possible he absented himself from Orme. He might often have been seen striding off through the wet woods like a man fleeing from the scene of a crime. And he would intend to be away for hours; but within twenty minutes he would have edged around in a half-circle until he was hurrying back to Orme. At such times it would be in his mind, temporarily unhinged, to rush through the house until he found Nora, and then and there wherever it might be to take her for his own.

Once, Jimmy Crisp having taken a gun and gone to hunt rabbits along the edges of the old cotton fields, David suddenly put down a piece of harness that he was mending, walked to the house as fast as a man may walk without running, and his heart beating with incredible swiftness stalked from room to room looking for her. At the foot of the stair, he hesitated a moment. During that moment his face darkened. He went then swiftly up the stair. The door of Nora's bedroom was open. She sat in a deep chair by the window. She had some mending in her lap—socks, David's socks. But she was not mending. She was crying softly to herself.

If David had been plunged suddenly into a pool of ice-water, sanity could not have returned more swiftly to him. And with the return of sanity all the beasts and dragons that had come out of the dark places of his nature to tempt him crawled back into them. Tenderness and pity reasserted themselves.

"Mendin'?" he asked.
She looked up at him, her eyes brimful of tears, some of which had run down on her cheeks. But she managed to laugh and say, "No, David, cryin'." Then she wiped her eyes frankly and laughed and said: "Nora's all kinds of a little fool. What you been doing?"

"Mendin'—the old harness. It won't be long now before we'll be sending Jimmy up to town to fetch Brant home. Some of the prisoners were marched back to the prison yesterday, Brant among them."

"In all that rain?"
"It wasn't steady—just showers, and not cold. It doesn't hurt to get wet if you keep moving . . . Just looked in to see if you were all right. What were you crying about?"

"Nothing."
David had not advanced beyond the threshold of her room; he did not now.

"Just the same old nothing?" She nodded. "Mustn't cry," he said. "There's always a way out if you don't wait too long. If it's—if it's all going to be too much for you, Nora, I still think you better take the cotton seed and cut and run."

"It wouldn't be right, David. We both know that."

"I'm not sure. If Brant is bad to you. Oh, Nora, why did you marry him?"
"I don't know. It's done. The milk's spilled. The stitch in time wasn't taken, and there's nine to take now."

"Oh," said David, "it makes me sick—sick!"

The old man had waked and they heard him calling.

"Father wants attention," said David.
"I'll come too," said Nora.

It had long been agreed that Jimmy Crisp should be the one to meet Brant at the prison and drive him home. It was no business for a woman, and David did not propose to subject himself to several hours of jeers and insults. Furthermore, he believed that young Crisp, being of a frank and guileless nature, would with his truthful account of all that had taken place at Orme during the last six months make Brant's jealousies and suspicions seem ridiculous even to Brant.

As the day of Brant's release approached the daily routine of Orme became mixed with a kind of tenseness and excitement. Even the old man felt it. He was very obstinate. They had told him that Brant was coming home. And he pretended not to believe them. He

demanding attention constantly and rebelled against it while receiving it.

David was like a man condemned to die. There being no escape, he had determined to go through with his part in the execution like a gentleman and a stoic. Nora spoke seldom, and little. Sometimes she reminded David of a sleep-walker.

At last the day upon which Brant was to be released dawned. Both Nora and David saw that dawn. Both had been staring into the hours of darkness which had preceded it. Neither of them had slept at all. The dawn was clear and fiery.

Brant had not slept either. He was all in a quiver of excitement and energy. At certain thoughts he laughed out loud.

Hard labor and hard fare had made a new man of him physically. His wind had never been so good or his muscles so strong. His eyes had never been so clear and handsome. In all the six months he had never tasted a drop of alcohol. If his character had been cleansed and strengthened with his body, he would have been fit to tackle the world and wrest a victory.

Unfortunately his character had not changed. And the plans which he had been making for his first hours of liberty were sensual. He would not, for instance, drive straight from the prison to Orme. He would see certain cronies to whom a mere term in prison meant no social disadvantage, and he would drink with them and put himself in touch with some of the local underworld schemes for getting rich quickly.

The prison gates were to be opened for him at five o'clock in the afternoon. He would be given a bath and shave, and the suit of clothes which he had been wearing on the day of his incarceration. He would first dine. He would dine defiantly in Balestier's best restaurant, and eat enormously of the best food that Balestier afforded. Terrapin were to be had at that season. He would drink champagne with his dinner. Somebody would find the money for him somehow. He would spend the evening with his cronies, drinking, talking and playing cards. Then he would drive to Orme, and there would be a beautiful woman waiting for him, and a jealous clod-hopper whom it would be amusing to torture. Afterward?

Well, he was sick of the old man and his money bag. He would simply take the money bag and Nora and the horse and buggy and go away. Who could stop him? If David attempted to interfere, he, Brant, would thrash the said David within an inch of his life.

After breakfast David and Nora accompanied Jimmy Crisp to the stable and helped him harness the horse. Nora gave him a purse with fifty dollars in it.

"Give it to my husband, Jimmy," she said, "and please don't lose it because money is very scarce. Tell him that we are glad his bad time is all over. And that we are all going to help him in every way we can."

"I'll fetch him right straight home," said Jimmy as he drove off. "Leave it to me."

Nora and David walked slowly back to the house. Their world was coming to an end. Each knew very well how that world might have been filled with happiness for both. And yet both had given in to their common and unhappy fate with hardly a struggle.

"He won't be home before half past seven at the earliest," said David. "I wonder if we ought to wait dinner for him?"

"I imagine he'll eat in town," said Nora.
Much as they dreaded the end of that day, it came with appalling slowness.

"I wish we knew if they'd come straight home or not. But there's no use waiting dinner, is there?"

At five o'clock to the second, the prison gates of Balestier opened sufficiently to let Brant Orme pass out between them. He had been closely shaved, and he had dressed himself with fastidious care. He had even succeeded in making his labor-torn hands and nails presentable. You would have thought

him some great magnate and patron of prisons rather than a recent inmate.

It is doubtful if a more vengeful or truculent spirit ever walked out of a prison gate. He hated the whole world and everything in it, except the possibilities which it offered for gratifying passions.

For at least an hour Jimmy Crisp and the old horse and the old buggy had been waiting at the curb. Brant looked them over.

"So," he said, "instead of coming themselves, they sent you. That was characteristic of them."

"Miss Nora's been sick," said Jimmy, "and David said he thought you'd rather I came."

"He was right," said Brant, "vastly and enormously right."

"Miss Nora sent you this," said Jimmy, and he held out the purse containing the fifty dollars.

Seeing that Brant stuffed the purse into a trousers pocket without first examining the sum which it might contain, Jimmy named that sum. Then he extended to Brant a grimy hand containing two grimy dollar bills and said, "Thought maybe you'd like to buy some flowers or suthin' for Miss Nora."

"That was thoughtful of you," said Brant and he pocketed the two grimy bills. Then he stepped lightly into the buggy and Jimmy offered him the reins; but Brant shook his head.

"Straight home?" asked Jimmy.

"No," said Brant, "to Sulk's place, and stop on the way at the little hardware store in Legrange Street."

The old horse had rested and was now willing to trot for a little while. The buggy bumped briskly over the cobblestones.

"I bet it feels good to be out," said Jimmy.

"You win," said Brant, "and if you don't mind we'll talk about something else. You say that my wife has been sick? How sick?"

"Hotten col' spells," said Jimmy, "and no appetite."

"Sick in bed?"

"They was a few days, maybe five, when she didn't come down-stairs."

"Who did you get to take care of her?"

"We didn't get nobody. Me and David took care of her."

"Sometimes you, I suppose, and sometimes David?"

"Yes, sir."

"I see."

"Any time she wanted anything," said Jimmy, "she had a bell to ring, and me or David would hear it."

"You been at Orme right along, Jimmy?"

"All the time."

"I suppose they sent you to town once in a while for supplies?"

"Only twice."

"What did you do mostly?"

"Mostly," said Jimmy, "me and David took turns doing chores, and took turns keepin' Miss Nora company. Evenings David'd read out loud to Miss Nora and me, or we'd play a game of yards, or jes' set on the po'ch an' chin."

"Do any gunning?"

"Most every afternoon I'd take a gun and hunt around. They's heaps and heaps of doves this year. An' one day I got a woodcock, and of course cotton-tail."

"You went shooting nearly every afternoon? You'd be gone for a couple of hours, I suppose?"

"I wouldn't go out when it rained."

Jimmy pulled up in front of the hardware store in Legrange Street and Brant got out.

The store had not yet closed for the day, and Brant after a glance at the display in the window went in. The first glass case in a row extending half the length of the store contained revolvers of various makes. Brant stopped opposite this case, and when a clerk came to wait on him, pointed with a tapping forefinger to one of the revolvers. It was a weapon of small bulk but large caliber.

Through the store window Jimmy could see both the clerk and Brant and the revolver. He



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wondered what Brant wanted with a gun.

Apparently Brant did want one. He even seemed to have a notion that he might presently need one. The clerk went into the back of the store and returned with a box of cartridges, and while waiting for his change, Brant tore the cover from the box, loaded the revolver, and slipped it into his hip pocket. It might have been Jimmy's imagination, but there seemed to be something coldly calculated and sinister about the whole transaction. He felt uneasy, a little anxious perhaps, and of course very curious.

"What make of gun did you buy?"

Brant told him. And then asked, "How do you happen to know what I bought?"

"I could see through the window."

"As you know what I bought, you may as well know in addition that I bought a gun because I may need one. I may need one before the night is over. You never can tell."

Jimmy knew that Brant had made many enemies in his life, and imagined that the gun was an answer to some threat or other which he had received.

"Sulk's Place," as Brant had named it, was entered in the city directory as "Sulk's Hotel." It was an old-fashioned square brick house with an added story of wood. It stood on the corner of two very narrow streets which had once been fashionable. The hotel was on good terms with the police. Otherwise its reputation was unsavory.

The hotel had two entrances. One was for bona fide guests, and the other just round the corner, with no lettering to distinguish it as an entrance, was for the habitués of the place, men and women. Many of these habitués were criminals.

When at Brant's direction they had brought up at the side door, Brant stepped out of the buggy and said: "I may eat here, and I may not. Just wait a minute and I'll see."

Brant pushed open the street door and it closed behind him. The minute of which he had spoken passed quickly, and was followed by twenty-nine others which did not. Jimmy imagined that Brant must have forgotten all about him. It had happened before. Still he waited a little longer, and was then on the point of entering the hotel and looking for Brant when the door opened suddenly and Brant came out. One corner of his mouth was twisted into a smile and he already smelled strongly of drink.

"I'll eat here," he said. "I've found some old friends. But it's no place or company for kids. You go and get a bite somewhere and come back and wait."

"What time'll I come back?"

"Let's say ten o'clock, or maybe half past. So long!" He turned and once more disappeared into the hotel.

Jimmy, who had given all the money he possessed to Brant, did not see exactly how he was going to get a bite anywhere, and he decided not to make the attempt. He was discouraged and disappointed and a little anxious. Sometimes Brant was very affable when he was drunk and had been winning money, and sometimes he was very ugly and terrifying. It was obvious that he was going to drink, and Jimmy began to dread the long drive to Orme.

After a while he gathered up the reins, clucked to the old horse and drove off. He had no especial objective. He could, he thought, hitch the horse somewhere and pass the time looking in the store windows of Market Street. Some of the more daring and forward looking merchants kept their shops lighted until midnight. Jimmy was soon wishing that he had not given his two dollars to Brant. At about noon he had eaten a "hot dog," and was now, as he might have explained it himself, "powerful empty." As his emptiness and weariness increased a resentment against Brant began to grow in him.

"I wish David had come instead of me," he thought. "He wouldn't 'a' let Brant slip off at Sulk's an' get to drinkin'. But what can I do? If I'd said anything, he'd 'a' given me blazes and I'd 'a' had to take it."

And he felt somehow that Brant's conduct was an insult to Nora. If she could forgive him for being a thief and be willing to take him back, at least he might have the decency to go to her sober.

And now Jimmy began to recall the conversation which he had had with Brant about Nora's sickness, and how Brant had literally pumped him with questions.

"He was trying to find out somethin' or other," thought Jimmy. "Wonder what?"

It took him a long time to arrive at the real motive behind those pumping questions of Brant's. Once you got the idea, the motive was obvious enough. Those questions had been the questions of a suspicious and jealous husband. Brant had been trying to find out how much and how often his brother and his wife had had the opportunity to be alone together. That was why he had asked if Jimmy sometimes drove in to Bolestier, if Jimmy sometimes went gunning, et cetera.

This conclusion quickened Jimmy's imagining powers, and filled him with anxiety. Miss Nora and David were the very highest minded "quality" that Jimmy had ever known. Suspect them of anything wrong! Why, they simply couldn't be suspected! Jimmy would gladly have kissed the Book and sworn to their innocence in word and thought and deed. Why, merely to think evil of people like that blackened your soul!

And Brant . . . If Brant once got drunk and mad he wouldn't listen to any reason or argument. He'd shoot. He'd shoot to kill and afterward he'd lie. You couldn't lie out of stealing an automobile. Automobiles were property. People owned them. But you could lie about your reasons for shooting your wife and your brother, and get your reasons believed, especially by persons who weren't familiar with the facts.

A man who'd just served six months at hard labor and came home and felt justified in shooting could get a lot of sympathy.

Jimmy tramped a number of times the whole prosperous stretch of Market Street, and looked at all the things for sale in all the windows, and worried himself sick. If Brant hadn't bought a gun and loaded it and hid it in his pocket, he wouldn't have worried.

At half past nine by the street clock in front of the "joolry" store Jimmy returned to where he had hitched the horse and buggy and drove slowly back to the side door of Sulk's Hotel.

Presently a bell in the tower of St. Michael's Church sounded ten times. After what seemed at least an hour it sounded again. Half past ten. Jimmy waited a few minutes longer. Then he made up his mind that Brant ought to be told how late it was, and not without hesitation, he climbed out of the buggy and entered the hotel.

He found himself in a long and narrow passageway, floored and paneled with wood which smelled damp and sour. At the far end there was an electric light of low candle power and dimmed with dust and cobwebs. Beside the light was a door.

Jimmy opened this door timidly, for he could hear a number of voices which appeared to be in a room on the other side of it, and found himself in another passageway, similar to the first but shorter. Here the voices sounded much louder, and above the door at the end of the passage and below it were bands of light.

Jimmy tried to see over the top of the door, and was not tall enough.

He knelt and laying his cheek on the floor looked under it.

He saw a room with a very big round table in the middle, and a bar with a brass rail, and many shelves of bottles behind it across one end. Above the shelves was an oil painting of a naked, sulky-looking woman.

Above the farther rim of the big table he saw the heads and shoulders of Brant, and of a young woman sitting on Brant's left, and of three men whom he had never seen before. Mr. Sulk himself, in a white apron, was in the act of serving them with a round of drinks.

Jimmy could not at first make out what the

people at the table were talking about, because at least two of them always talked at once. But when Brant spoke, which was presently, the others kept still and listened.

It seemed then that those who spoke in pairs or all together were friends of Brant's and that they were trying to persuade him to make a night of it with them, and not go home to Orme. The girl never seemed to speak, but she had her own theories of persuasion. Every now and then she would simply pull his head around sideways and glue her mouth to his. For a moment after each of these attempts at persuasion she would smile. Otherwise, her face was as impassive and cool as it was comely.

Brant appeared to enjoy the occasional glumings but not too much. He remained firm in the intention to leave his companions after just one more round. But Nellie wasn't to worry. He had always loved her. And when he had finished a certain imperative little business which called him to Orme, he would return. He would meet them all the next day at about five o'clock. There was some money owing to him. He would collect that, and whoever had the brightest idea would get that idea capitalized.

And Brant rapped on the table and nodded to Sulk, who came presently with another round of drinks.

"If you're going home tonight, Brant, you'd better not take any more liquor with you. If what you say about your brother and your wife is true, you'll need a clear head. First thing you know you'll get mad sometime when you're drunk and kill somebody."

"If I happened to be an injured husband," said Brant, "no jury in the South would hold me."

Sulk shrugged his shoulders. "Have it your own way," he said.

Jimmy Crisp was panic-stricken. He got up from the floor and fled back to the buggy. He did not know what he ought to do. Brant had been talking about Miss Nora and David, and to all intents and purposes had threatened to kill them. They must be warned somehow, but how?

Jimmy decided to drive to the police station and tell his fears to the Sheriff. Without question the Sheriff would either go to Orme himself or send a deputy and the situation would be saved. At the very moment when Jimmy had come to this decision, the side door of Sulk's Hotel opened and Brant came out. He walked steadily enough, but it was evident that he had been drinking heavily.

It was now out of Jimmy's power to warn the Sheriff of Brant's mood and weapon, and he resigned himself to the long drive to Orme with the darkest misgivings.

As soon as they were in the country Brant produced a pint flask of whisky and took a swallow. And thereafter every fifteen or twenty minutes he took another. Now and then he spoke, but not often. Once he said:

"Twice I have walked every inch of this road chained to a nigger. I am not likely to forget." A little later he said: "My case could have been fixed for a thousand dollars. I told my brother. Did he raise the money? He did not. I am not likely to forget. I wonder why he wanted me put where I couldn't interfere with him? I wonder!"

His mood was very bitter.

The night was dark and sultry. Once a wheel of the buggy hit a stone and the lantern swinging below the rear axle went out. Jimmy had some difficulty in relighting it.

The sudden cessation of motion, and the silence, made Brant sleepy. His head nodded, and his lower jaw having fallen, he made a faint sound as of snoring.

Jimmy listened, breathless. Then, having succeeded in lighting the lantern, he rose cautiously to his feet, and trembling with excitement, approached the buggy on Brant's side of it and tried to get the revolver out of Brant's hip pocket. He intended to throw it as far off into the bushes as he could. But he could not get at it. Brant was sitting in such

a way that any real attempt to get the revolver out of his hip pocket must have waked him. Jimmy abandoned that particular measure of safety and sought another. It was not hard to find.

"It ain't more'n five miles to Orme," he thought, "an' if I can't get there befo' this old boss, I'll eat bats and toads."

What if Brant did get mad? David and Miss Nora must be warned. It simply had to be done.

Oh, Brant might beat Jimmy within an inch of Jimmy's life for all Jimmy cared!

The first very short stage of the long five miles to Orme he made very quickly, and on tiptoe. Then he began to trot, and then to run.

Unfortunately the old horse felt that he was being abandoned, and he started out after the boy at his best trot. This gait, broken and pitiful though it was, could be kept up almost indefinitely.

Jimmy's best gait could not. Jimmy wasn't the soundest boy in the world, and he didn't have all of the best habits. When he could get cigarettes, for instance, he smoked one right after another. When he couldn't get them he smoked grape vine, or tea and odds and ends of twine and rope loaded into a dirty old pipe that he had.

The jolting waked Brant, and he sobered sufficiently to gather in the reins just as they were sliding over the dashboard. He could not see Jimmy for the darkness, but he shouted his name, and Jimmy was so frightened that he almost stopped running and waited for the buggy to catch up with him. But he didn't. He ran on and on. Presently he was running with his right hand pressed to his right side, and on his face, if you could have seen it in the darkness, a look of agony. Under that hand was what athletes call a "stitch." It hurts amazingly and is very crippling.

Brant, wide awake now, though by no means sober, was angry and for some unknown reason suspicious. He had the feeling that Jimmy was trying to "put something over on him." And on the old horse's lean flanks he made a telling use of his whip. Brant gained rapidly on Jimmy, and Jimmy, almost at his last gasp, and as the result of an almost miraculously quick thinking process, found himself suddenly crouching among bushes at the side of the road.

The buggy, with its suspended lantern wildly swinging, passed him, and now it was he who pursued the buggy. He ran himself out, but he caught it and with his last ounce of strength managed to climb into the back. Back to back with Brant, but on a lower level, his legs swinging, Jimmy fought hard to recover his wind without making a sound. . . . There was a short cut. When you get very near to the Orme gate he would drop off and at least get to the house a half-minute before Brant could. That and the sudden hiding in the bushes was the miraculous piece of quick thinking.

They came to that place. It was the exact place where Nora and David and the old man had stood when Brant, chained to his nigger, had turned and recognized them. Brant remembered that place, and because he remembered it, the old horse had to suffer.

He received a terrible cut with the whip—and he broke into a gallop.

Jimmy dropped from the back of the buggy, fell, picked himself up and ran for the house as fast as he could run.

During the long drive from Balestier that tall, handsome and drunken ego, Brant Orme, had been of several minds: to rush into Orme and kill and rob and abandon; to temporize; to torture before killing; to get the most money and service possible without killing. But on recognizing that exact point in the road where he had labored with pick and shovel and had looked up and seen David and Nora with their eyes alight for each other, he had suddenly believed all the hateful things that he wished to believe, and it was an avenger and a killer who made the turn into the gate of Orme on two wheels, and cruelly striking an aged



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horse, drove up the long avenue of live oaks to the front door of the house at a run.

Nora and David had never spent a more miserable evening. They tried a game of picquet, but it wasn't a success. They couldn't keep their minds on it. They tried to read and gave up. Efforts were made to persuade Hannibal Orme to go to bed. But he was obstinate. He was determined to sit up until Brant came home. But this did not prevent him from sleeping.

At about eleven o'clock, in the midst of a silence during which they had been standing on the veranda listening, Nora exclaimed: "What can have become of them!"

And David answered: "I suppose Brant stopped somewhere to take a drink, and then took another. When men get drinking, time doesn't seem to mean anything to them."

"I'm sorry for Jimmy. Nothing to do but wait."

"I'm sorry for everybody," said David. "There doesn't seem to be anything for any of us to do ever—except wait."

Again they listened. Then David: "I didn't mean to talk such nonsense. It's just nerves. They're frazzled. I can conceive of situations in which waiting might almost amount to a career. Think of that old Roman general who managed to put off fighting the Carthaginians for so long that their organization and morale went to pieces, and he beat them easily."

Nora conceived that David's patient waiting amounted to a career, and said so.

"But," said David, "I don't choose to wait. I have been made to."

"Do you know," she said, "I have awful thoughts sometimes, and awful wishes. I try not to have them; but I can't help myself."

"As for instance?"

"Night after night I've wished that when I waked up the next day it would be to find that your poor old father had died in his sleep."

"I sometimes wonder how I'll feel when he does die. I think I'll feel badly. And I think that I'll miss him. But it's a great wonder that he lives on. He's had two strokes. After the second, years and years ago, the doctor said that his arteries were in such a state that I must be ready for a third and fatal attack at any moment. I asked the doctor how long my father could live at the very outside estimate, and he said six months."

"Doctors don't know much, do they?"

"I've had very little experience, but it seems to me that they know an awful lot, and have an awful lot to learn. . . . If Brant doesn't show up pretty soon, Nora, I think you ought to turn in. You must be nearly dead and you may have to make an early start tomorrow. I hope not. But it's on the cards."

"And I wouldn't turn in for anything," said Nora. "I hate the waiting and the—the suspense. But it's a marvelous night. And if—it's the last chance I'm ever going to have to be with you, I don't choose to miss any of it. I don't think you know how fond I am of you, David. And how much I trust you, and how much I like to be with you!"

There was something that for some days David had felt that he ought to discuss with Nora. But it wasn't any easy thing to talk about and although there had been favorable opportunities, he had dodged them.

"Nora," he said presently, "I wasn't altogether frank with you about the talk I had with Brant at the camp. I did tell you the truth; but not all of it. Do you remember the day we went down with father to see the convicts work, and found that Brant was among them? Well, after you and father had gone, he said some terrible things, and later when I talked with him at the camp that rainy day, he had the same obsessions. I can't believe that he really believes what he says he believes; but I think you ought to know what that is. He thinks or pretends to think that you and I are in love with each other and that—that we are not honorable. For all guidance in human affairs Brant looks into his own heart and what

he sees there he thinks is precisely what is to be found in any other heart. I thought that you ought to know."

"But," said Nora, "if he really thinks that, what will he do?"

"He can't really think that—not after he has been here a little while and sees how things are. But, if I know him, he will be angry and insulting. When he is like that he is very hard to deal with. Jimmy's a good boy. I hope that Brant will ask him questions and be satisfied with the answers. It's nothing that he should be hateful to me and suspicious of me. He always was. But it makes me sick that you should be involved and forced to bear a share of it. Whatever I am, at least you are as innocent of any wrong-doing in this world as anyone could possibly be."

"When you say 'whatever I am' in just that tone of voice," said Nora, "I'd laugh if I had the heart to laugh. You seem to imply that while I am innocent as a lamb, you aren't."

And she did laugh. But David couldn't join in.

"To be innocent," said he, "your doings must be innocent and your thoughts too. If I have wished and still wish that Brant had never come into your life, and that I had, it isn't an innocent wish. If I wish that you and I were to make a life together, instead of you and Brant—wish it with all my heart—at least he has some grounds of resentment against me. I believe that my doings have kept within the law, but my thoughts haven't. And I hope that you won't be angry, or misunderstand me, because I have told you."

Nora was not angry. She was a woman. Her emotions were about as far removed from anger as is possible. She forgot that Brant was on his way home. She forgot that the prospect before her was hideous, horrible and absolutely hopeless. She realized only that the man she loved was telling her that he loved her.

He told her, indeed, very simply and dispassionately all about his love for her from the beginning. She wormed it out of him. She wanted to know. The knowledge could avail her nothing; but in the dark days ahead she would have it to console her.

"Do you remember one afternoon, Nora? You were in your room with some mending in your lap, and suddenly I appeared in the door. And you looked up and I saw that you were crying. I had come running to tell you that I could not live without you. That I would not! I believed that to be the truth. But your tears changed me, and I knew that I must. We talked for a moment about trifles. And I went away furious with myself."

"Why were you furious, David?"

"Because I felt that I had spoiled a good record."

"But you didn't spoil it. Even if you had spoken, nothing would have been spoiled. We would have known instantly that even—even if I had felt the same way about you—that circumstances were too strong for us. A brother and a brother's wife!"

"But you are not his wife," exclaimed David with sudden vehemence. "You are nobody's wife. Not yet!"

Nora laid a hand on his shoulder, and she said, "That's quibbling, David."

And he said: "Oh, I know it's quibbling, Nora. It just blurted out of itself."

They were silent for a while. David thought that he heard a far-off sound of wheels and horses' hoofs. It was not a real sound, but a sound made by his imagination and the beating of his pulses in combination. When he discovered this to be the truth, he literally shivered with relief. Brant ought to have come a long time ago; Brant had not come yet. Perhaps he would never come. Perhaps he had seen fit to abandon Nora.

A faint little light of hope began to burn in David's tormented brain. Nora abandoned, safe from that beast! They would raise money somehow. She could go to some other state of whose civilization divorce is considered a respectable component, and she could make herself free of Brant, and there would once

more be savor in the world, perfume in flowers, music in the singing of birds.

There would be ugly stories. People would say, "All the time the poor fellow was in prison, they made love to each other." They would say that Brant, becoming aware of the situation, simply stepped aside like a quixotic gentleman. They would say that, and more, and worse. But it didn't matter. What is said never matters at all, spiritually, unless it contains at least one molecule of truth.

"Nora," he said in sudden excitement, "do you love me?"

And she said, "You know I do."

"Then listen. Brant may not come tonight. If he does you will be hidden away safe. I will keep you hidden until he goes, or until you can be got away. You will find some dealer who knows about old furniture and silver and send him here. Somehow we'll raise enough money for you to go to another state and get your divorce. But that is our only chance. I do not see why we should stand here waiting until our lives have been crucified beyond hope. Will you do it?"

"David," she said, "we could never have any real happiness based on even the smallest possible thing that either of us thought was wrong."

"But suppose Brant doesn't come. Suppose he abandons you."

"I don't know. It might be possible then. Listen!"

But it was only Hannibal Orme, talking in his sleep. They went in the house to see if he needed anything.

They went back to the veranda. They strolled down the long avenue of live oaks to the gate. All the time they discussed their situation with all its pros and cons and could not arrive at any satisfactory conclusion. Finally David said:

"If Brant will listen at all, I think we should tell him frankly the way we feel about each other and ask his help in getting a divorce in another state. If I had a lot of money that I could give him, he would listen, because his financial position, with the black-eye of a prison record thrown in, is really desperate. Of course I haven't got a lot of money. I haven't any money at all. But I have the cotton seed, and samples of cotton to prove the seed. I believe that if you will take that seed, and Jimmy Crisp to help you, as I proposed a long time ago—I believe that after a year we'll have no trouble whatever about money. In the meanwhile, if what you think about the furniture and silver and things is true, we ought to be able to keep Brant going."

"Brant is sure to ask father for money, and then we'll have to do a lot of explaining. I hate to think how we have lied to the old man. Sometimes I think that he knows that we have lied, or suspects it, and dreads to know the real truth about where Brant has been and what he has been doing, and helps us to keep up the fiction. But we'll cross that bridge when we come to it."

"I think we ought to tell Brant," said Nora, "but I'm afraid it won't do any good. . . . I wish your father wouldn't sit up so. He rests a whole lot better in his bed."

David laughed. "I'm pretty strong," he said, "but I'm not strong enough to put father to bed if he doesn't want to go. Athletics, except riding and hunting, weren't the fashion when father was young. But if they had been, I bet he'd have been one of the great athletes of the world. He had the size and the speed, and in his hands especially, next to a blacksmith's vice, he's the strongest thing I ever saw. Brant takes after him, but on a small scale. And then Brant was lazy and never kept in trim."

"You take after him too, David. I've seen you handle those heavy old chests in the attic as if they were cardboard hat-boxes."

"I reckon strength runs in families," said

David, "and so does success, and failure, and happy marriages, and unhappy ones, and everything. Honey, you must be dead tired. It's been awful for you waiting round like this. Will you do me a favor? I reckon it's the first favor I ever asked you, so you ought to grant it. Will you lie down on the sofa in the hall and rest? I'll get a quilt to put over you. And maybe if I keep creepy mouse quiet you'll fall asleep. The minute I hear them coming, I'll wake you."

As a matter of fact Nora was so tired that she could hardly stand. She was so tired and her nerves were so overwrought that she no longer cared what happened to her, or what became of her.

"In the end," she said, "the watching and the waiting always fall on you, David."

She went obediently and lay down on the sofa.

David fetched a quilt of squares of faded green and white silk, and spread it over her.

"Just shut your eyes," he said, "and let your muscles relax. Try to sink into the sofa as deep as you can."

She closed her eyes and she relaxed her muscles. She said: "You're so good, David. You do all the watching and waiting, and you weren't meant for that."

In his heart David now believed that Brant would not come home that night. He would probably drink too much and spend the night in Balesier. All then was not lost. A Brant shaken by excess might be easier to deal with. David remembered other home-comings, when Brant had been so sick that he could not hold his head up. He had been a tractable devil on those occasions.

If Brant would only come home the next day as sick as David had sometimes seen him, there was hope. He might be persuaded to accept what little money Nora had, all that could be raised by the sale of silver, furniture and paintings, to agree to a divorce from Nora, and thereafter to go away forever.

But suppose that in sickness and misery Brant should agree to these things. And suppose that the moment he felt better he repudiated the agreement.

David walked once more all the way to the gate, trying to think things out. Before he reached the house again, he had decided upon a course of action. If Brant could not be persuaded and bribed to let Nora go, the tragedy of their lives and his must be allowed to take its course. If on the other hand Brant could be bribed and persuaded, and thereafter wished to go back on his bargain, David believed that moral justice would give him the right then to fight for the keeping of that bargain.

"In that case," he thought, "I will fight for her. I won't let him go near her. I won't let him, not if I die for it."

"And if he does come tonight," thought David, "it is certain that he will be drunk and brutal. From a brutal and drunken man, any man has the right to protect a woman. And I will protect her and—talk things over in the morning."

Of his ability to protect Nora, David had no doubt whatever. Naturally strong, years of hard work about the plantation had made him steel. He needed only to be sure that his cause was just in order to win his fight against almost anyone.

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Belle Livingstone's Story (Continued from page 92)

more than I did, though what she had to worry about was not clear, as she was traveling at her own expense and had none of the restrictions I was under.

When we reached the Gare du Nord, the porter who took charge of our baggage asked where we wished to go. I took a look at my purse and instantly decided that cabs would have to be avoided if possible, and told him "Hotel Terminus," which is situated at the station itself.

As we entered the hotel, I decided to begin to spin my web at once. Before going to my room, I went to the telephone box and rang up the Café de Paris. I remembered that Sir Paul Chater, the Hongkong millionaire, whom I had met at Elsie Fay's a week or two before, was on his way back to the Far East via Paris, and as I knew he always dined at the Café de Paris, I rang up Louis, the king of gérants, to ascertain his whereabouts.

"Hallo! hallo! is that you, Louis? Belle Livingstone speaking. Can you tell me if Sir Paul Chater is dining at your place tonight?"

Louis replied that he was, and that he was accompanied by a Mr. Gubbay (whom I had met with David Sassoon, his relative by marriage, and who was also a very wealthy man).

"Good! Then reserve me the next table to theirs, with three covers, no matter whom you have to shift! . . . Au voir—à tout à l'heure!"

I then rang up a young American artist of my acquaintance and asked him to come and play dummy for me at the Café de Paris.

I chose my most seductive gown and a wrap to set it off and left the hotel early, as I wanted to call on a friend at the Bristol. On the way I stopped at the Café to order our dinner—and there and then broke the second condition of my contract by telling Louis I was making my way round the world on a bet; therefore it was absolutely necessary I should know these two wealthy Eastern Englishmen better, as I was going their way.

When I returned to the restaurant, I found my companion and the accommodating young man waiting at our table, which Louis had covered in pink roses and violets.

The place was filling up rapidly. I lingered over my oysters as I kept my eye on the door, and my hot consommé became cold consommé while like a handsomely dressed spider I anxiously awaited the arrival of my flies.

At last I saw the bulky form of Gubbay, followed by that of his friend—smaller in stature but big in importance. As soon as they were seated, I raised my head.

"Well, this is a bit of luck!" gushed the genial Gubbay.

"It is!" I said inwardly to myself, and I introduced Mrs. Jerome and Carl Mathers.

I extended myself throughout the dinner to be as entertaining as possible, and when the time came for the bill to be presented, Louis came forward and told me, in a tone that could be overheard by my friends at the next table, that my dinner would be "on the house." Then, speaking as if to all of us, he said in his most gracious manner: "It is so rare that Madame is not dining with friends that we shall be glad to have this opportunity to entertain her."

This may sound extraordinary to some people, but it is quite the custom in first-class restaurants in France, when the wife or other relative of a good customer is without an escort.

This little attention evidently pleased our friends from the East, who immediately ordered a magnum of the very driest and joined us at our own table. The magnum aroused their roving spirits, and my brace of millionaires suggested an adjournment to Maxim's, which was their downfall.

There Mr. Gubbay asked me what our program was. When I informed him that we were going to Monte Carlo, he suggested we should make the trip with himself and his fellow traveler as far as Port Said and return thence to Monte Carlo.

Having been given this delightful opening, the spider's spinning machine at once began to work, and after I had laid my bejeweled fingers conspicuously on the table, I spun this little reflection:

"Well," I explained, "I couldn't leave Paris immediately because I haven't the money available," and I went on to inform him that I had really come over to order some dresses, and that by the time they were ready my lawyers would have sent me funds.

"Oh, if that is all the excuse you have for not going," broke in Gubbay, "then call the guards and carry off the Princess and her suite at once! No, no, no!" he added, motioning down my attempt to speak. "I will call for you tomorrow evening and take you to the station!" and with this autocratic declaration the party broke up and we went to our hotels.

Next morning found me rushing from dress-maker to milliner and ordering every new thing to be sent out to me in Cairo.

Mr. Gubbay called for me as arranged and, almost exhausted, I just managed to scramble into the Paris-Rome express when the long train pulled out of the Gare de Lyon on the second lap of my trip around the world.

We left Genoa the next evening, but we saw practically nothing of our two "flies," and for all they did to relieve the monotony of the trip across the Mediterranean they might have been traveling with wives. They were busy nearly the whole time with stacks of important looking papers, and we saw them only at dinner time, or perhaps for a stroll on deck before and a game of cards after.

For me the voyage was a most uninteresting one, yet evidently Mr. Gubbay was not of the same opinion, for on our arrival at Port Said he pressed into my hands several rolls composed of twenty-five sovereigns each, with which to pay the cost of my presumed trip back to Monte Carlo.

"You have been a regular circus of fun!" he said, in a tone that had a ring of sincerity about it. "I'm sorry you are not going the rest of the way with us."

"Then save your money when you get home," I said, "for something tells me our paths will cross again—next time, perhaps, in far off Hongkong—and I shall once more play clown for you!"

I had telegraphed from Paris to the Savoy in Cairo for my rooms, so that we were expected. The suite was a large one, and while the manager was showing it to me I told him I wanted a carriage with two saice, by the week, that plenty of fresh flowers should be put in the drawing-room every morning, and that, for that tired feeling, I desired some champagne—at once, and very dry. Poor May gasped in astonishment and crumpled up in an armchair, with a querulous, troubled look in her eyes; but that first night in Cairo I felt like a million dollars and wanted to act like it.

That rich feeling had not worn off when one of the native servants attached to my suite gave me a mysterious message, which he said he had received from another native who had called at the hotel and inquired for me. It was to the effect that at four o'clock the next afternoon I was to be at a point below the new Nile bridge, where I would find moored a dahabiyeh flying the American flag.

I tried to question the man, but it was useless, as he obviously knew no more about it than myself.

Curiosity kept sleep at bay, while imagination ran wild over each new guess. Who could it be? It must be some American or he would not have our flag. Why so much mystery?

The next day dragged itself in, after a long night. While I guessed and watched the hands of the clock, the hours slowly passed until it was time for me to set forth on my curious adventure.

The carriage was waiting and soon, with every detail of my toilet attentively studied, I was at last driving in the direction of the Nile.

From the bridge I saw the dahabiyeh flying the Stars and Stripes, while from all the flower boxes of the boat tumbled an orgy of color. These Nile dahabiyeh are a cross between a yacht and a houseboat. On this one I was evidently expected, for as soon as the horses were reined in, and even before the saic had taken hold of their foam-flecked bridles, an Arab servant came from the boat to show me on board.

I noted at once that the easy chairs and brightly colored rugs had been arranged with unusual taste; but imagine my surprise, on entering the first room, to find that it was done in soft tones of rose and gray. Each table and each corner had some special thought for my pleasure; even my favorite books had all been remembered.

Advancing farther, I came upon a bedroom which was the exact facsimile of what my own had been in my house in London. This, however, had been made more romantic by a carpet of pink tea roses, in which I had to walk ankle deep to reach a bed which was also covered in roses of the same shade.

I was confused and troubled. Was I dreaming? I rang a bell which I caught sight of on the table, and a servant immediately appeared carrying the eternal tray of coffee, which he placed beside me with all the solemnity of an altar boy serving his first mass.

It was all so puzzling that I began to grow fearful and got up to go; whereupon the same boy again came towards me, holding out a small tray on which was a letter addressed to myself. I opened it, and read:

An old friend of yours permits himself the liberty of asking if he may dine tonight on your boat; and may he suggest that you wear riding kit, as that is how he best remembers you in London?

There was no signature, and the writing was unknown to me. Were the day's mystifying surprises never going to end? Here was a man asking me to dine "on my boat," when I hadn't one, and telling me to be in riding kit, when I had no horse.

Returning to the hotel, I said nothing to May of my afternoon's experiences, and went at once to get out my riding things—a sand-colored princess, trimmed with brandenburgs of a shade darker, which made me look as if I had been melted and poured into it. Covering my costume with a military cape, in view of the unusual hour of the day for such an outfit, I again drove off to the dahabiyeh. The same servant came off the boat and escorted me on board, when to my intense surprise I saw coming forward to meet me—Lord Kitchener!

He was then Sirdar of the Egyptian Army, and was in some part of the country, I knew; but how on earth could he have known that I was in Cairo, when I hardly knew it myself?

There was an amused twinkle in his eyes when he gave me a hearty handshake, and then we sat down to dinner.

I could hardly wait to ask how he could have managed to reproduce my rooms without having ever been in my London house (although he was frequently in my flat at the Walsingham); but I had learned by experience that men are more expansive after a good dinner, and I curbed my curiosity until coffee was served.

Lord Kitchener had a manner that made one feel he knew one's thoughts, even the most secret, and that night he proved that mine were not difficult to decipher. Before I could give voice to a single one, he stood up and, lighting a cigarette, he anticipated my surprised queries, "How did I know you were here?" With his humorous smile he answered his own question. "If the staff work is properly done, we always know where the enemy is and what he amounts to. How did I know the color scheme of your London house? Why, the cleverest people in the Intelligence Department have been busy matching samples of rose silk!

"Joking aside," he continued, "one day a man offered me this boat, more in jest than anything else, and as you had said you were

coming out to Egypt again, I decided to turn the ramshackle old thing into a playhouse for you. I had it cleaned and painted, but when it came to the furnishing I did not even know what colors you liked; so I had a friend write off to Beresford [Lord William Beresford], as I knew his wife often dined with you, and she could tell me all I wanted to know."

Without giving me time to repeat how lovely I had found my playhouse, Kitchener went on: "I shall have to leave for India almost immediately, for the Durbar, and I want you to go to it as well, and see a very lovely American woman queening it as the Viceroy's wife!"

He meant, of course, Lady Curzon, formerly Mary Leiter, of Chicago, whose husband—since then, and quite recently, the British Foreign Minister—was then Viceroy of India.

"I have got a cabin for you," Lord Kitchener added, "on a boat that will just get to Bombay in time for the Durbar."

My senses almost reeled. A dahabiyeh on the Nile, one of the world's greatest celebrities at a tête-à-tête dinner with me, a trip to India, with the Durbar, one of the historic events of the century, by way of amusement—surely my wits were procuring me much more delightful experiences than my money had ever done. I was "making my way round the world" with a vengeance! It was a night of dreams, and even more than my dreams was coming true.

Coming back to my surroundings, I remembered there was another question, which Kitchener had not anticipated and which I took a certain joy in asking: Why had I been told to wear riding kit on a boat?

"Surely," he replied, "you would not snub a night like this without going out into the moonlight?"

Hardly had he spoken than I heard the sound of horses' hoofs, which slowed up as they drew near. Soon we were in the saddle and away. While we were walking our horses under the palms, he told me that the day he had called at the Walsingham to tell me good-by before his return to Egypt, I had been in my riding-habit, waiting for my horse to be brought round.

"I thought then that I should like to see how that girl from the Golden West rides!"

"I bump my saddle in Western style," I replied, "but I can raise myself while trotting like you do in Rotten Row!"

At this we put our horses into a canter, and after a gallop around the race-track we went towards Cairo, where we picked our way through the narrow streets and out again on the other side of the town, into the sand-swept road leading to the tombs of the Califs. On arriving at the entrance, another mysterious native stepped out from the dark and took our horses while we dismounted.

We wandered about for a while and then sat down, and for the first time I forgot that I was talking to a great military leader. I saw only an Irishman, full of sentiment, fierce, defiant even, when friendship was concerned.

He told me how distasteful it was to have the glare of publicity always focused upon him, and he meant it. He was as pleased as Punch to think he had so cunningly evaded everyone, so that he could show me an Egyptian night.

Kitchener asked me about my life and what I intended making of it. He seemed to understand a spirit like mine, that craved excitement and found living a real joy, and he did not think fit to give me any advice as to the necessity of living within the social bounds.

He asked me if I had ever been in love, and I told him truthfully, "No," but that I had had some glorious friendships. At this he stood up and strode up and down, slapping his whip against his riding-boots.

"Exactly—friendship is a thousand times finer than love!" and, using an Italian saying, he added with no little fierceness: "I would go into the midst of a hundred knives for a friend! I believe love is a sham," he insisted firmly, "whereas friendship goes on forever and beyond!"

He told me how love had once stolen into a

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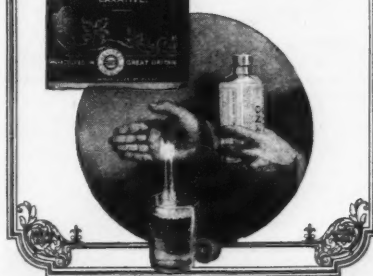
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friendship when he was quite a young man, and had killed the finer feeling. Ever since he had despised a sentiment that could be attended with so much unhappiness.

I believe Kitchener understood me better than anyone else in the world. My love for adventure he satisfied by the many little pleasures he arranged for me. My friendship he knew was sincere, and as we sat in the City of the Dead, under an Egyptian moon which was dominating everything below, I felt sorry for all the women who had never known the great friendship of an understanding man. I knew, when he pressed my fingers as he helped me into the saddle, that in Lord Kitchener I had a friend who would be a friend for life. Years never broke the pact we made when visiting the tombs of Egypt's illustrious dead.

A few days later Lord Kitchener left for India, and I went to live in my playhouse on the Nile.

Nearly everyone one then met in Cairo was a member of the Catahoi family, either by birth or by marriage. I was once a guest at the Cairo opera house of the boss Catahoi, the head of the great banking house which bore their name, when an amusing incident occurred. This gentleman, it may be recalled, was the biggest victim of the notorious Madame Humbert, who swindled him out of millions on the security of the fabulous contents of an empty safe at her house in Paris.

The night in question our host was absent, owing to his presence at the bank being necessary. He was not much missed, for his box was crowded with Catahois; nieces, nephews, sons and daughters and in-law's of every description also filled other boxes, till it seemed as if the entire theater was composed of members of the clan. All were loaded with diamonds, and simply blazed with wealth.

Suddenly the freakish idea came into my head to pose as a wealthy woman myself and show how little I thought of diamonds. I was wearing a solitaire diamond ring, which had cost me three thousand dollars at Tiffany's in London. Slipping it off my finger, I dropped it into my corsage. Then I announced that I had "lost my ring."

Instantly the whole box was in commotion. Everyone jumped up and began searching the dark corners on the floor. Harvey Pasha, the commander of the British Military Police, who was sitting in the next box with some officer friends, came into ours and asked me what had happened. Harvey Pasha and I were old acquaintances.

"Why," he said, looking me straight in the eye after I had told him of my loss, "I saw the ring on your finger a moment ago, when your hand was lying on the partition between the two boxes!"

"Hush!" I hissed at him. "I'll strangle you if you say another word!" and then in French I added, in my most offhand manner, with a sigh: "Quel dommage!" and ground my heel into his toe.

The police chief understood there was more in my loss than met his eye, and went off to smoke a cigaret.

Needless to say, the ring was never found. I insisted that everybody should stop bothering about such a trifle. "What is a diamond more or less, anyway!" I exclaimed, in my most nonchalant manner.

The contempt with which I treated the loss of the white gem must have impressed the others in the box, for the incident was detailed by the young people to the chief of their clan when we all met at supper. The next morning, to my surprise, he sent me around one of the loveliest solitaires I possess today. It was worth at least three times the one I had "lost," as I have confirmed by the expert opinion of skilled appraisers at Deauville, Monte Carlo and other places, and by the valuation of technicians in England whose habitation is distinguished by the presence of three gilded pills over the door and who have many times had the stone through their hands. In justice to myself, I ought to say that I had not played at losing my ring with any intention of receiving another.

The time for my departure for India drew on, and as a first step I disposed of my dahabiyeh. On moving back to the Savoy, whom should I see the first night at dinner but a Count Laltazzi, whom I remembered I had previously met at Monte Carlo. I had forgotten for the moment who he was, and then I recalled that he was a man who had told me, on the occasion of our first meeting, that he had been trying for days to be presented to me, and that, alas, now that he had met me, he was leaving on the very next morning; hence the immense basket of flowers he sent me, with "P. P. C." written on his card, had meant nothing at that time in my young life, and I never thought of him again until I saw him volplaning across to my table at the Savoy.

He clicked his heels and bent his good-looking body in two, while he got rid of all his Italian superlatives—"Gentilissima, bellissima, simpatica" and all the rest of them. I did not respond to his gushing slush, however, even by a smile, and after dinner May and I went to a theater and on to the Continental for supper.

On returning to my rooms I took off my dress, slipped into a negligee and went out on the moonlit balcony, while May made her usual protracted toilet.

It was a wonder night, and from where I stood I could catch here and there a glimpse of the silvery Nile, stealing away into the sleeping desert, while before me rose the giant Pyramids, like specters towering into the clear night. From afar came the strumming tattoo of a *durbakka*, or Arab drum, belonging to some native musicians; and then, suddenly, from quite near, the piercing shriek of love-torn May!

As I stepped back into my room, she rushed into my arms, looking as if she had seen a ghost—as she indeed had, for as my eyes followed the direction indicated by her pointed and trembling hand I saw, to my utter astonishment, the handsome face of Count Laltazzi.

I took a good look and a good breath and, as he came forward, a good push at my bell; and then I began to give him a piece of my mind for his intrusion.

"So," I said, "you thought I was one of those money-spending American women enjoying Europe, with a perfectly good husband parked somewhere at a desk, working hard for my pleasure! Why, even if you were done up in a package addressed to me, I wouldn't take the trouble to undo the string!"

Then suddenly the humor of the situation enveloped me and I had to laugh, but even then I did not spare the intruder. In the midst of my harangue, I heard the servant coming in answer to my ring and, pushing the culprit into the drawing-room, I ordered champagne.

I did not get rid of Count Laltazzi so easily, however, for henceforward, whether the sun shone or not, his shadow was always falling across my path, until I was positively glad when the day came for me to quit Cairo.

Little did I imagine that this man, whose attentions to me almost amounted to persecution, was fated within a few months to become my first real husband.

At last the moment came for May and myself to catch the liner in which Lord Kitchener had secured passages for us to India. The passengers for the Durbar included King Edward's brother, the Duke of Connaught, and several other very interesting people. One notable member of our ship's company was Mrs. Levi Leiter, the mother-in-law of Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India, who was to take the place of the King at the Durbar.

From Bombay practically the whole ship's cargo went direct to Delhi, where everybody who was anybody in England seemed to have assembled. Lord Kitchener had arranged for me to stop with a family he knew, and there, despite the overcrowding everywhere, I was made very comfortable.

All the hundreds of descriptions of the Durbar have never really conveyed any idea of the splendor of the scene. Anyone who would visualize it properly must simply close his eyes and think of a saturnalia of wild

coloring, a blaze of light, innumerable multi-colored flags and pennants waving over a crush of purple and gold, elephants laden with priceless trappings, bearing princes from every part of the world, reckless in a display of jewels and orders, the entire mass scintillating under a gorgeous sun, which glorified the ostentatious pageant.

After Lord Curzon was seated on the throne, all eyes were fixed on his beautiful American consort, who ascended the dais and made an obeisance to the Viceroy, her husband, so low that her forehead almost swept the red velvet carpet at his feet. Every American present was bursting with pride to think that our democratic country had bred a woman so lovely, who looked as much a queen as the daughter of any blue-blooded family.

I saw little or nothing of Lord Kitchener while I was in Delhi, and as soon as the Durbar was over I hastened to get on to the next stage of my sporting trip, which was Ceylon. There were such crowds returning to Europe, however, that I had to go clear back to Aden, at the entrance to the Red Sea, where I succeeded in securing a cabin to Colombo on one of the Bibby steamers.

We anchored off Colombo and, dressed in a simple serge costume for going ashore, I was leaning on the rail watching the small craft making for our steamer when in one of the approaching boats I caught sight of a strikingly handsome man who was reclining, clad all in white, in the stern sheets of his smart craft, which was rowed by four native oarsmen. He appeared to be lying on dozens of cushions, while six or eight white-clothed personal attendants stood by to minister to his comfort. Suddenly, to my astonishment, I heard him hail the captain of our steamer and ask him if there was a Miss Livingstone on board.

No trap-door ever swallowed a vanishing stage demon quicker than did the door behind me which led to my cabin, where I made a lightning change into the most seductive and flimsiest things I possessed. By the time the handsome stranger had climbed on deck, I was prepared to meet him, and to be informed by him that it had been arranged that I should stay at the Galle Face Hotel, and that he was to escort me hither.

Five minutes later I was myself reclining among the innumerable silk cushions. It was not until I arrived at the hotel, which is delightfully situated outside the town, that I knew who my handsome escort was. In the dining-room were gathered several of the ship's officers and some of my fellow passengers and their friends in Colombo.

As we entered, the captain rose and for the first time formally presented my escort to me, who turned out to be a Mr. Phil Davies. Mr. Davies, I found by a whispered inquiry of the captain, was one of the sons of the world-famous jarrah-wood king, the produce of whose widely scattered forests pave the streets of all the great cities of the globe, and most of the smaller ones. The headquarters of Mr. Davies père are at Perth, in Western Australia, and he had sufficient sons to enable him to appoint one to act as his viceroy in each of the world's continents. Thus the eldest son rules over the African forests, while my host is lord of the timber wealth of Asia, and others reign over South America, Europe and Canada.

A dance had been arranged for us for the evening, and in anticipation of this I dined with Mr. Davies. On sitting down and picking up my napkin, I was surprised to find beneath it a beautiful ruby and diamond bracelet, accompanied by my host's card. On the following day he sent me up a bandeau of rubies and diamonds for my hair.

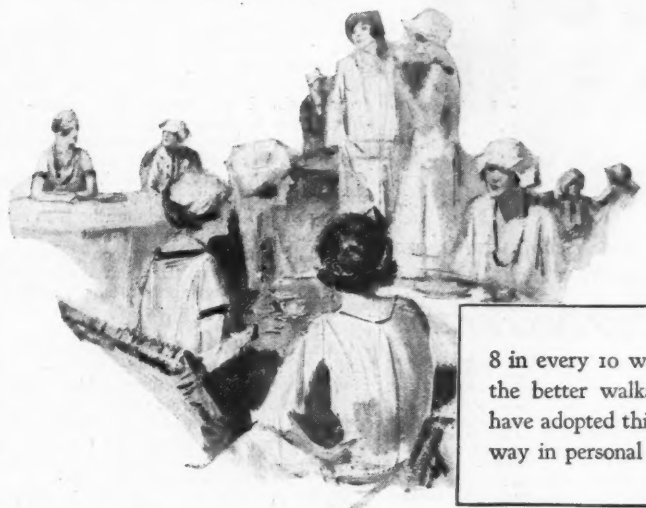
I could not understand the reason for the costly presents he was showering upon me, and when I went out on the veranda on the second evening after my arrival I took my host to one side.

"You are quite good-looking enough," I told him, "to attract any woman without any such lavishness. What does it mean?"

After a little persuasion he explained that

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It is as easily disposed of as a piece of tissue. No laundry.

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his brother Arthur, who had often been to my house in London, had passed through Colombo a short time before on his way to Australia, and had taken the opportunity to warn his younger brother that I was on my way round the world on my wits and that, although I was not good-looking, I would hypnotize them if they were not on their guard.

"In other words," I said, "your costly gifts are, as it were, peace offerings made to a dangerous siren, to save you from being enthralled?"

"Well, no, not exactly!" Mr. Davies laughed back. "As the warning was given to me at the club before a lot of other fellows, I conceived the idea that I would show them what a dreadnought I was among the women by obliging you to show me particular attention while you were here, and thus indirectly help you to win your very sporting wager."

"You bet it is sporty," I replied, "considering my fatal beauty, but it will be jolly easy to win if everywhere I meet some one who is as easy and as considerate as yourself!"

Is it any wonder that even today, whenever I pick my way across a street paved with wood blocks, my mind travels back to a big, generous-hearted man felling timber in some far-off tropical forest?

Count Laltazzi's attentions continued ceaselessly, although I had left him far behind in Egypt. A batch of letters from him reached me in Delhi, all swearing eternal fidelity and protesting fulsomely his love, in characteristic Italian fashion. No sooner had I set foot in Colombo and my whereabouts had become known than others arrived at my hotel.

My life in Ceylon was a dream. Every day was filled with movement, during those hours when the burning sun rendered anything but sleeping possible, and soon I was participating in early morning breakfasts, early morning rides, and the long siestas that filled in the impossible hours before late dinners and late nights. I thoroughly enjoyed the busy, desultory, sleepy ways.

One of our sources of amusement every morning was an Indian magician, who made a practise of coming before the great verandas of our hotel. Squatting on his heels, he either played on his gourd pipe a favorite melody to his pet cobra, or made a mango tree grow before the eyes of the astounded tourists. Subsequently after stowing away the cobra and other snakes, together with a mongoose, each in their own personal calico sacks, he told fortunes.

Mine was an exceptionally exciting one, for the fakir proclaimed that I would marry four unhappy men in succession, but that I should afterwards make a fifth husband very happy. Strangely enough, down to the time of writing this, I have married only four times. I am trying to make myself believe that my four husbands became unhappy only because I left them, and that my next one may be happy only because, with my wanderlust wings now somewhat wearied, I may have to remain at home with him.

On the evening of the fortune-telling incident it was so warm that, instead of going to bed, I took a seat on the veranda and ordered a lemonade. I noticed in the dim light that at the next table there was a man who had a beard and wore a monocle. I dropped my fan, but though he tried to make conversation when he picked it up, I ignored him and went almost at once to my room.

In the morning I found I had been robbed of the beautiful belt purse filled with golden sovereigns which had been given to me on leaving London by the famous mountaineer, Edward Fitzgerald, as a parting gift. I reported my loss immediately and received a visit from the chief of police, a striking looking Englishman, dressed all in white, with gold braid.

As usual, like most American women, I knew who had taken my purse almost before I had missed it, and I did not hesitate to accuse the man who had picked up my fan on the veranda on the previous night. He had been the last

man near me before I missed the purse—therefore he must have taken it.

As a result of my insistence, the unfortunate man was arrested, but he was of course released at once, as there was not a shadow of evidence against him. Instead of resenting my accusation and kicking me into the sea, my victim proved to be one of the most affluent and efficient aids I could have wished for to assist me on my trip.

The accused man turned out to be James J. Van Alen, who married John Jacob Astor's daughter, and who at one time, under the Cleveland administration, was American Ambassador to Rome. He was also one of the original "Four Hundred."

Mr. Van Alen not only did not resent my hasty and unfounded accusation against him, but insisted on making good my loss. Further, he offered me the use of the army of elephants and servants he had engaged to make a trip through the Singhalese jungle, a project which he had been obliged to abandon.

Mr. Van Alen left for the Farther East the next day, but I promised to see him later in Japan and tell him my adventures on the jungle trip which I was to take in his place. Lucky Van Alen! Some one must have put him wise! For my trip, which cost him \$3,000, was made insupportable by innumerable chattering monkeys, shrieking parrots, roaring beasts, flies great and small—both harmless and stingers—and occasional snakes, which latter were silent but frightful.

At the rest-house where we halted to spend the night, the servants warned us against leaving our shoes about, lest a centipede or scorpion or some other poisonous terror crawl into them. We were also advised to pull the mosquito net up off the floor and as a precaution to tuck it under the mattress. Fires blazed outside to keep off the tigers, and thus we passed—I do not say slept—our first night in the jungle.

Scarcely had May and myself packed ourselves, along with our shoes, hats and other belongings, behind the fragile barricade of the mosquito net, than we felt the curtain moving. There was a flurry and then a thud on the floor, a brief struggle and all was still. No two scared women ever prayed for day more than we did.

With the first glimpse of daylight we saw a dear little mongoose and a snake lying both dead on the floor, the reptile's venomous fangs still gripping the plucky little animal's throat.

Enough is plenty. I decided we would turn back. We never stopped until we found ourselves once more in Colombo, where my friends again refused to tire in entertaining me. I left Colombo and the hospitable friends I had met there with every regret. I had met the Malay monarch at one of George Edwardes's suppers in London, shortly after his Majesty had defied the traditions of his country by marrying an Occidental—a beautiful show girl from the Gaiety.

We went on to Singapore, where we witnessed an open-air circus from the Sultan's box and afterwards dined at his palace, and thence to Hongkong, where Mr. Gubbay met us on our arrival and took us to his house for luncheon, after which we went to our hotel. There I found a letter from Count Laltazzi, and one of my oldest friends from Paris, Wilson Porter.

His look of astonishment when he saw me made me wonder what had happened. He promptly explained. "My dear child," he said in his most impressive tones, "you two girls mustn't dream of staying in Hongkong a moment longer than you can help! Don't you know that the two most important imports into this country are American missionaries and—well, pretty American ladies, if you know what I mean? Now, nobody here is ever likely to mistake you for a missionary, but—"

I understood—and gasped. I thankfully acceded to his suggestion that May and myself should continue our voyage by the next day's boat, in the company of his sister and himself. I thus saw very little of Hongkong, except its beautiful harbor.

That evening we dined with Sir Paul Chater at his luxurious home, and afterwards, as our boat was not due to leave until four in the morning, two of my friends took us for a tour of the town. This led us through "the street of sinful joys," where I must confess the word beautiful applied to every woman I saw. European beauties paled in comparison; no artist ever had such models for his work.

Our boat stopped four hours in Shanghai, and from there I went on to Japan.

I shall never forget my first impression of the Kingdom of the Rising Sun. At the first port, where we arrived in the night, I opened my port-hole at daybreak to look out at the dawn. I saw bright greens and reds and yellows such as I had never before seen, which fairly shouted to us from the shore.

Nakamura, the Japanese guide whom Mr. Van Alen had engaged for me, was waiting to pay me a thousand compliments and receive his orders. I took him with us in the boat to Kobe, where Van Alen himself, who had come to Japan on a search for Ming china, rejoined us.

May I never know another collector of anything, whether it be stamps or echoes, for all the rest of my life! So that he might be able to peek into everyone's kitchen and cellar and attic in quest of his Ming plates and pots, we did Japan in rickshaws. Hardly would we get settled in them—one can't exactly relax in a rickshaw or one would fall out—than Van Alen would spy a little dinky mug or saucer on the table outside some little Japanese paper house. The procession had to stop, while the whole village flocked to see what was the matter.

We had seven rickshaws in all, of which two were piled mountains high with luggage, and May, looking very disconsolate, brought up the rear.

She seemed to pass her low spirits on to her coolie, who was always lagging behind.

Although I felt a real love for Japan, the beauty of it all cast a spell of loneliness over my spirits, which made me more indulgent than I had hitherto been when Count Laltazzi, who arrived in Japan about the same time as myself, pleaded with me to become his wife. To be quite frank, I am not quite sure whether the chief contributing cause was not the cunning little Japanese babies who were toddling everywhere under the blossoming cherry trees in their gaily colored kimonos and who made me long for something all my own.

Before consenting, I cabled to my sporting god-father, like a prudent woman, telling him that I had had an offer of marriage, and asking him how the bet would stand if I accepted it. I added to my cable that I had sufficient money to pay all my expenses back to London without necessitating that I should cash my draft.

Mr. Ansell replied at once: "You win the bet—take both the money and the man." I decided to take his cabled advice and informed my suitor of my decision. Soon afterwards we were very quietly married.

My husband was a tall and exceptionally handsome man of Austrian-Italian descent. He held a post in his country's diplomatic service, after having previously held a commission in a crack cavalry regiment, and he had hopes of speedy promotion to an important position.

His name, Florentino Ghiberti Laltazzi, was as melodious as his nature was cultured. He loved music and good literature, and he was unusually skilled in the lost art of brilliant conversation. He talked, indeed, with such particular success that I was almost induced to believe that he loved as sincerely as an American. It was, perhaps, a polite and finely mannered love, but all the same it was a very agreeable one, for he never seemed to tire of showing me both extravagant and flattering attention.

I feel that, even had his feelings changed, he would have told me, rather than that my pride should have been wounded by a discourteous word or act.

"I want you," he once said to me, immediately after I had given him my word to marry him, "always to be impeccably dressed," and he carried this wish out so literally that he would never enter my room in the morning unless he was assured that I was perfectly attired to receive him. Had he ever seen me otherwise, I am sure his graceful tongue would have ceased to be eloquent, and all the charm I represented to him would have been lost forever.

How many thoughtless wives have wrecked their own happiness, with untidy hair or a frowsy dressing-gown!

When Mr. Van Alen heard that I was marrying the good-looking diplomatist who had braved the savage Siberian Railroad to overtake me in Japan, he made me a present of a substantial draft with which to buy myself something on my return to Paris. With it was a small box which I was positive when I first caught sight of it could contain only one possible thing—a small Ming bowl. I was so enraged when I opened the box and saw that my suspicions were confirmed that—I am ashamed to confess it—I promptly flung the thing, package and all, out of the hotel window and heard it, with unrestrained delight, smash into a thousand pieces on the stones of the courtyard below.

Wilson Porter was one of the witnesses at the wedding, and Louis Eppinger, the director of the Grand Hotel at Yokohama, where I was staying, was the other. Mr. Eppinger gave us a wonderful wedding breakfast, and hung our going-away rickshaws in wisteria, and filled them with mauve satin pillows embroidered with the same graceful flowers.

The Grand Duke Boris, who was then yachting on the Japanese inland seas, invited my husband and myself, both of whom he knew, to spend our honeymoon with his party. We preferred, however, the garden-like waysides, with an occasional pause at some picturesque shrine that had been raised to the gods of Shinto or to Buddha.

On our return to Yokohama, we stopped with Wilson Porter, who was a nephew of General Horace Porter, at one time American Ambassador in Paris. Our plans at this moment were to settle for the time being at Viareggio, on the Italian coast, where Puccini had his seaside home. After cashing the draft I had received from Mr. Ansell, the winnings from my bet, I gave my husband part of the money to buy a property there which he fancied. I also made him a wedding present in cash with which to buy himself some polo ponies.

The receipt of news of my mother's poor health, however, upset all our plans, and it was arranged that I should return to Europe via the United States, in order to see her, and that my husband should go by way of St. Petersburg, where it was a question of his being appointed to a post in the Austrian Embassy in Russia, and should then go on to rejoin me in Paris.

The Grand Duke Boris, after returning to Yokohama and giving several splendid parties, sailed in the Nippon Maru for San Francisco, and on the ship's subsequent voyage I went with her and occupied the suite that had previously been used by the Russian Prince.

I was naturally very reluctant to leave my husband, and I was also sad at parting from Mr. Porter, who had done so much to make my stay in the Far East pleasant. On my leaving, he hung my suite with flowers, but the blooms the Japanese florist selected for the purpose—funereal tuberose and heliotrope—were flowers of ill omen, as was sadly confirmed by events.

We parted, on that misty Japanese morning, never to meet again.

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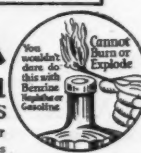
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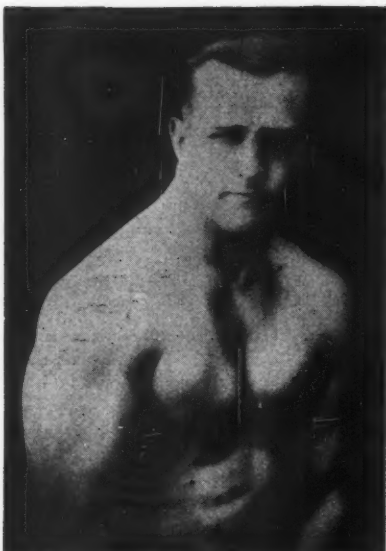
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The Coconut Pearl (Continued from page 37)

more heat than I should have thought myself capable of. "I'm exactly thirty-three."

"Then," said Bobby Young triumphantly, "it stands to reason you should come."

The logic was crazy, but somehow it convinced. I began to understand how a solid business firm had trusted Bobby with its traveling. One could imagine him triumphantly selling useless truck to keen Chinese: to Malays who know that a cent, worth one-fifth of a penny, has two sides, and that you had better look at both before parting with it.

So noon found me creeping across a flat pale plain of sea, rained on upon all sides by the crystal fires of equatorial midday, in an open, creaking prau. Bobby Young, a little forward, lay on the ribs of the craft as if they had been down, smoking a fierce cigar and talking endlessly. In the ceaseless showering of his talk, pearls were the principal element; if I had been interested in the subject, I should have learned a good deal.

"More things in the sea than have ever come out of it," he was saying when I woke up from a half-dream in which I had been watching vaguely the perfect cone of Klabok turn from palest speedwell color to sapphire, to violet, to near bright purple and green. "Anyone who's knocked about the pearling islands knows a thing or two that nobody'd believe. New fish the divers come across and don't think it worth mentioning; dead ships they find, and gut 'em, and hold their tongues. Any diver who'd been long at work could make your hair stand on end with his yarns. One chap I know went crazy, beastly crazy, because he found his mate with one foot hanging out from the end of a giant clam—*Tridacna Gigas*, you know."

"No."

"And his head poppin' out of the other end. I could tell you better things than that."

I said nothing.

"But as to the pearl being the size of a walnut," he went on, leaping as lightly off one subject and on to another as a goat jumps from rock to rock, "I don't believe it till I see it, even if the old witch's husband was Frank Watts."

That waked me up. A man who has been a teacher will react to Frank Watts' name as inevitably as a terrier reacts to "Rats!" "Good Lord," I said with some sharpness, "you don't know what you're talking about!" "Don't I? I did enough beastly study at one time to know, if I don't. I know all about Frank Watts—Doctor Frank Watts, biologist and the rest of it. I know about his deep sea discoveries and his palling up with the Prince of Monaco and coming out here and trying experiments with Malay divers who can beat white men hollow, to see how much a man could stand in the way of depth. And getting tied up with a Dutch girl, and marrying her, and getting knifed by a Malay whose brother had winked out with diver's paralysis on account of Frank Watts' experiments. They buried him in the sea—it's in the schoolbooks."

"Yes; I—"

"But all the same, if she had had a pearl that size, she'd have gone home to Holland with it, she and the kid. You can't tell me. My Lord, if I had a pearl the size of a pea—just one pea—you wouldn't see me for the spray the screws of the steamer would be kicking up, with me on board twisting the tails of the engineers. There's the old girl's palace; what do you think of it?"

I looked with eyes of interest on a pale, shadowed building that was suddenly rising up out of the water—as you remember the palaces of Venice seem to spring.

It had thick pillars of white stone, many but not tall; there was a long terrace of steps in front of it, with little statues standing on a balustrade. In the middle the steps narrowed to a single flight, which ran right down into green sea-water, with shells and weeds clinging to the lowest slabs of marble. On each side of the house, clusters of hundred-foot-high bamboo cast penciled shade; there were coral

trees and flamboyants leaning over the sea, dropping their red flowers into the water, so that it seemed full of little flames. Some oranges, fallen from drooping boughs, were bouncing slowly down from step to step as our prau, sail lowered, drifted to the stairs. More turned and sank and rose again in the water by the bow of the boat; there were orange-flowers among them, too. Through fruit and flower, we pressed our way to the landing slab, and Bobby Young leaped out.

I suppose I must have been hypnotized; I followed him up the stairs, into the swaying shadows of the flamboyant and bamboo, across the space of the open stoop—marble, like all the rest—into an inner hall with at least a dozen large doors giving on it. There were two ladies there, lying on lounges. They got up as we crossed the stoop, and the older came forward to meet us.

She was a woman of many years; that I saw at a glance. She wore the usual Dutch-Indian negligée of dressing-jacket and sarong; her massive gray hair was coiled tight on the top of her head. She was thinnish, and walked slowly. There was, however, nothing old or feeble in the angry brazen eye with which she met us; nothing indeterminate in the gesture which pointed, sharply and commandingly, down to the prau below. She said a few words of guttural Dutch to Young. He, quite unabashed, answered her in the same tongue and I gathered that I was the subject of discourse.

"I'm telling her," explained Young, with a half concealed wink, "that you're all sorts of a learned old pot and have come out here to study because you heard of Frank Watts having been about these parts years ago. Try and look as like it as you can."

"Well, as it happens," I said with some heat, "I do hold a London degree, and biology was my special subject, so Frank Watts' deep sea work does interest me extremely. That is, it would if anything did."

I don't know what he was going to say, for the old woman—he had not been far out when he described her as an old witch—turned to me with some dignity and addressed me in excellent English.

"If you are a scholar, sir," she said, "you are very welcome here for my late husband's sake, and I hope you will stay with us a little."

A good deal to my own astonishment, I heard myself replying: "You are extremely kind and I should like nothing better."

"I do not want your friend," she added calmly.

Young had sidled out of earshot and was, as I saw with the corner of an eye, trying to flirt with the girl. I saw, also with the corner of an eye, that she was taller than her mother, slim like a young betel-palm, and had a mass of exquisite pale hair falling all over her shoulders.

It came very hard with me at that minute to refrain from saying that Young was no friend of mine. But I felt that it would hardly be playing the game.

"He has many business engagements," was what I finally got out.

"I know him by the gossip of Ternate," she said. "Let him go look about that business. Perhaps you will send for your clothes, *nee?* And I and my daughter Marina, we shall make you welcome, if you will have a week or two here."

I don't know how she managed to get rid of Bobby Young; she had him trotting down the slippery marble stairs again in about two minutes, but I heard nothing of what she said. I ran after him to speak out of earshot.

"I'm sorry," was all I could find to say. "I hope she hasn't been rude."

"Pretty beastly," was his answer, given with a laugh. "I don't mind her, though; I'll call again with my samples and see if I can't sell her a dozen Cure. You're in luck's way. I say—I say, didn't you tell me on the way out you were married?"

"I—what has that—"

"Plenty. I remember now. You did mention your wife—about boats—I asked you if you'd ever owned a boat, and could you steer, because the blighter who had the prau was—and you said you'd had one, but never steered it; your wife always did. She alive?"

"Is that any business—"

"Yes, every business, now I've seen that girl. Why, she's a beauty; and she owns, or will own, the biggest pearl in the East if the story's true. Is your wife alive?"

One could not snub him; as well try to strike a jet of water.

"Yes," I answered, and turned my back.

"Good-o!" he chimed.

I did not see him embark and glide away again in the prau; I was too bitterly occupied with the pain his words had waked—the pain that all these months had done little to soothe. For I had had a wife and a friend, both loved. And I had them no longer, though she was not dead.

She was married—married again. But I have said that I will not tell the story.

It was like a dream to me that night, to find myself sitting at meat on the white terrace, underneath the stars, with the old woman and her daughter—friendly, at home with these strangers as I had seldom been with any in the English places. We fitted one another; we suited. Frank Watts' queer old widow questioned me with pathetic interest regarding my knowledge of her husband and his work. When I told her that I had written a good deal about him at one time and another, and once delivered a lecture on famous men of science that included him, the tears came into her eyes.

"Mister, you do not know how much it is to me that I hear this," she said. "I have brought up Marina English; she has read the English books; one day she will take place in the English society. Marina will be rich, but I am hoping they will think of her as Frank Watts' daughter more than for riches."

Riches! I looked about the ruined palace; I noted the one small servitor waiting at table, the food from the Malay market—no mistaking those chunks of meaty fish in soy, that bean and pepper soup, those fritters of various kinds; good, but seldom used in European kitchens.

I looked with newly observant eyes at the dress of the two women—Mrs. Watts in the poorest of cotton, the girl in silk, but silk of the kind worn by natives; slippers on both, no stockings on the lean brown ankles of the mother or the white ones of the girl. Why, it was poverty, grinding poverty, that spoke here; they would pay for my visit with weeks of bitter saving—unless I could find means to make them take money from me.

"Dead men's shoes need long waiting for," was what I produced in answer. It was a bait; it caught.

"There are no dead men's shoes for Marina, unless mine," said the old mother. (How old was she? well on towards seventy anyhow, and the girl was scarce twenty; Frank Watts, always eccentric, must have wedded that pitiful thing, a Dutch old maid. No wonder she was grateful, worshiped his memory!) "There is this island, and the palace, which was of a sultan formerly, and there is the pearl of her father."

Marina had never spoken a word up to this. She had sat silent at the far side of the huge table, eating little, staring, in a well-mannered, covert way, at myself. I began to remember that I had been thought a good-looking fellow in days when such things mattered; I found myself twisting an eye towards the useless, tarnished mirror that winked from one of the pillars. It was while I was doing so that Marina spoke; I looked back hastily. She was leaning forward, her white-gold hair, twisted into a heavy rope for coolness, hanging down one shoulder and over her breast; her curious, green-sea eyes staring harder than ever.

"Mother, have you thought?" she said in a breathless kind of voice.



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"I do not think, Marina, I know," answered the old woman.

"It is safe?"

"Look for yourself."

"I have been looking, mother."

"What does your spirit tell you, daughter? Believe your spirit always; she is sent by God to protect you."

"She says—" The girl leaned forward; her eyes, color of the deep sea-water below the marble stairs, seemed to flow over mine. "She says—yes, trust."

"You know they call me a witch?" said the old woman, with an abrupt change.

"I—I have heard—"

"But they are right. If I were not a witch—if the Malays had not known it—Marina and I, we should be found floating below the stairs, very long ago, with the cut of a kris in our throats. They are afraid. Now I will show you how I am a witch. Give me your hand. Do not be frightened. I will not make any harm to you."

I gave my hand, wondering what was to come next; laughing, almost, at the absurd solemnity of it. There was silence for a minute, and then the old woman spoke, in a whisper: "There are many poisons here in Insulinde, but there is none for you."

I snatched my hand away. "Thought-reading," I had almost said; but that would have been to admit.

"Yes," she answered me as if I had spoken, "yet how is it that I know that what you are thinking of will not be? I tell you, I am a witch. I can call spirits, I can see through mists which cover souls."

One remembers the time when such claims were not taken seriously. Nowadays we know more.

"I'm prepared to believe you have unusual powers," I answered her. "I understand the influence you must have over the Malays. But why do you think they would have murdered you?"

"A Malay would murder his mother and father and all his relations for a pearl as large as the top of Marina's smallest finger," she answered.

"And your pearl is larger than that?" Curious, the warm interest that was running through my veins, stirring me like wine. Or perhaps not curious, in view of the effect that great gems have on all who come within their—mostly malign—influence.

Watts' widow laughed. "It is the largest pearl in the world," she said. "In the world! And only my man in all the world could have got it." There, suddenly, she pulled herself up. "Mister, you must be tired," she said. "I will show you your room." She led me into the central hall, opened a door and handed me a candle. "Sleep well," she said.

The moon shone in through two huge windows, bats, big as rabbits, whirled and squeaked outside. Down below, I could hear the faint sea lapping on the last of the marble steps, could even catch the faint sound of an orange from the trees on the terrace bumping slowly down from stair to stair. I sat on the edge of the gigantic Dutch bed and wondered how I came to be there; wondered if I should not wake up in the *pasanggrahan* of Ternate, and find it all a dream. Then, though it was no more than nine o'clock and I had been sure I could not sleep before the small hours, I went to bed, and knew nothing more until the parrots began to shriek from the bamboos, and the little Malay boy stole in to bring my morning coffee.

If the evening had been dreamlike, the days that followed were still more so. The aching of my mind was strangely soothed. It was as if the melted-gold heat of the islands, felt until now by the body alone, were creeping softly, kindly, into the frozen regions of the soul, thawing away pain of cold, loosening an ice-bound heart. There are those to whom the tropic suns bring life; they only will understand.

Likeness of mind, unexpected yet strong, drew me to the old woman; through her, to

the daughter. Emma Watts, with her queer interest in matters occult, her wide reading, fostered by the years of loneliness on Klabok, her simple, genuine reverence for scholars and learning, suited me well, and it was clear I suited her. "I should have liked her for a relation," I thought. Then, with an instinct that—for the moment—was blind, I turned to the slim figure of Marina. She was like a daffodil that day, I thought—in the poorest, prettiest of green muslins from the "pasar," with her ash-gold head above. I wondered how it was . . .

"Mister," said the old woman, without lifting her eyes from her knitting, "you are the first visitor Marina and me we have had for six years. Since Marina was thirteen."

Marina, her light feet crossed against one another, seemed not to listen as she leaned against a pillar and played, tossing up and down a ball she had made of rich hibiscus, passion-red.

"Mister," went on Emma Watts, the needles clicking ceaselessly, "when my man died, he left Marina and me his name; that was truly making us rich. But he has not left other riches for us. A little—just that one thousand English pounds that was his insurance. Mister, it is twenty years next year that I have been spending the one thousand, and she is almost done. In this old palace of the sultan's which my man bought, we have lived with that money; and Marina has read the books of her father, and she has had food enough for a girl—she is not thin, mister."

Suddenly, pitifully, I understood how it was—must be—that old Emma Watts had escaped the Dutchwoman's common fate of middle-aged fatness. "Food enough for a girl . . . I was glad I had won out in my determined fight to pay my board."

"I have thought, mister," went on old Emma, "that when she was the right age to marry, we should go together to my man's England, or maybe to my Holland, and there, in London or Amsterdam, I should sell that—her voice lowered; she looked round cautiously—"that pearl." The needles clicked wildly for a moment or two. "I have guarded it," she broke forth. "I have guarded her—all the same, the two; two pearls, mister."

"You are right," I told her. "She is a pearl." And saying it, something seemed to break inside me, and I knew the long frost was gone, and warm springs welling up once more.

The old woman continued: "Here in this Insulinde was the best place for my two pearls, mister. You do not think it? Well, it is so. On my island, in my old broken palace, the two pearls were safe. There is nothing that the Malays fear so much as sorcery, and for them I am a sorceress. I have knowledge; I am not the wife of a man of science for nothing. Perhaps I have helped my sorcery." She looked at me with candid, faded brown eyes. "Mister," she whispered, "I was justified—for anything I did."

"I am not one to judge you," was my answer.

Emma Watts shook her gray-plaited head as a bird shakes water from its plumage. "There!" she said. "Past is past, mister. My pearls are saved. Now I have a thing to ask you, because you are an honest man, and I have not known three honest men in all my life. Marina must marry. But, mister, the marriage portion! That she must have, if she marry a Hollander; if she marries an Englishman, too it is well to have money. And the money to take her home and place her among the people of her father—or my Amsterdam—away from all this half-caste sort of the islands—it is much money."

She paused a minute. In the interval I heard Marina, at the other end of the stoop, singing to herself as she tossed her scarlet ball; I heard the green and ivory little waves lapping coolly on the lowest steps of the marble; I heard, once more, an orange, dead ripe, drop from the trees and go bumping slowly down stair after stair.

"Mister," said old Emma, dropping her

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knitting and staring me in the face, "mister, I cannot sell my pearl."

"Why not, *Mevrouw*?" She looked at me. Oh, the age, the cunning, the deep cruel knowledge and experience that spoke in her eyes!

"You know nothing of pearls and what they do," was her answer. "Lies cling about great pearls, mister, and cruelty and death. But above all lies. No one who touches them goes without—how do you say it? *Scathe*."

"A literary word," I answered, "but it will pass." Something seemed to touch me, not pleasantly, in her words; was I quite unscathed?

"I took—the pearl," she said, lowering her voice as she always lowered it at that word, "once, in need, to an old, very old Chinese merchant of Ternate. We locked the doors; it was late at night and no one saw. One hour after I came away, mister, he was dead."

"Murdered? With the pearl?"

"Murdered, but without the pearl, mister. I had not sold it. Why? He would give nothing for it—nothing but a few poor hundred guilders. 'It is too risk,' he said. 'I shall not make my money.' And I took it back; but for the very shadow of that pearl that passed through his godown, that no one had seen, he died."

"Why would he not—"

"Wait. There was a Portuguese merchant once who passed through, traveling to Macao. I made him swear secrecy on his crucifix. Then I showed him the pearl. 'Mother of God!' he said. But he too, he would cheat me; he pretended that he could give only a little. So he went away."

"I am deeply interested, *Mevrouw*," I said. "But I cannot quite see what it is you want me to do."

She looked at me curiously.

"Last week," she said, "you meant to die. So it shall not shock you when I say that I am to die, without meaning it. No, listen; Marina is gone—always at this time of day she goes to bathe in the shallow water under the stairs. She cannot hear. I have had a bad trouble in my heart; now it gets worse, and the time is short. Last night I almost died—that is not the first time, and I think the next will be the last. Mister, if my Marina is a pearl, you are a diamond; I can read the hearts; I know you are an honest man, and that is as rare as the diamond. You have no woman you love, or you would not dream of the poisons of Insulinde as you did—last week. Now when I am gone, if you will guard her home to England, that's well; if you will love her, that is better. I would leave you my two pearls."

She stood erect, a certain dignity in her ravaged, time-worn figure and shabby clothing. I have said that I liked Frank Watts' widow. In that moment I looked back through twenty years and realized how—even at forty-odd, even without beauty, money or position—she had attracted that simple, honest gentleman.

I thought of the picture of Marina, with her green-sea eyes and sea-nymph slenderness, leaning against the pillar, grasping in her cold hands those passionate hibiscus flowers. Dead things waked in my heart; the ice was gone, the springs were flowing.

"If she will have me," I said, and stopped. *Mevrouw* nodded. "Now," she said, speaking low again, "you shall see the lesser pearl."

She disappeared. It was some time before she called me into an inner room, lighted only by a large hanging oil lamp. She shut all doors, and there, in the streaming heat of the enclosed space, she unrolled a long silk scarf that covered an inner parcel, again of silk—another and another.

"They have told you," she said, "that it is as big as a walnut of England, or a chestnut of these Malay markets. Do you believe them? There is no one living has seen it to tell the truth."

"Well, if you ask me," I said, "I imagine it has been a little exaggerated. Pearls the size of chestnuts, so far as I know, don't exist."

"You are right, mister; it is not the size of a

chestnut," she said, and as she unrolled the last of the blue silken wrappings, making a nest of it, she laid in the center, like an egg, the pearl.

Pearl! I did not know what the thing was on which, half stunned, I looked. It had the shape and luster of the finest gem that ever centered a queen's coronation necklace; it shone beneath the hanging lamp, fair as a fallen moon—but—

"*Mevrouw*," I gasped, "why—it is as big as a coconut!"

In truth it was. Not as large as the green nuts in the husk that one sees in tropic forests; as large, perhaps, as the smaller, rough brown spheres that show in grocers' windows at home. I could not believe what I saw. I lifted the gem, felt it. It was smooth as the fine silk on which it lay, and its weight was like a ball of stone. I knew that such pearls did not exist, could not exist, in view of the size and capacity of any known pearl-bearing shell, but the thing nevertheless was there and was real. The idea of any imitation never crossed my mind; it would have been as motiveless as impossible.

The thought that came to me I spoke out at once, carelessly. "I wish Bobby Young were here."

Her eyes lightened. "I do not wish," she said. "My guardian spirit tells me about him as about you. He is not bad, but weak, blown about as a moth, and that is worse. He is like all the others who want my two pearls; one to spend, and one to fling in the mud. Not you."

"*Mevrouw*," I said, "I meant no harm—but Young does know a great deal about pearls, and I know nothing; he might be able to value it for you—suggest a market."

"I will not have him," she said, wrapping the pearl slowly, lingeringly, as nineteen years before she might have wrapped that other pearl, the fairer of the two. "My spirit has told me things . . . Mister, I am not easy when Marina is out alone bathing; let us return."

She disappeared again, and I waited; I knew I had not heard all about the pearl.

In a minute she called me and I joined her on the terrace. We looked down below the last of the marble stairs, to the water full of red flowers and bobbing fruits. Marina was not there.

"Wait," she said, "while I go look among the bamboos."

I was considerably astonished by and by to see the tops of the bamboos waving violently and catch a swift glimpse of some white figure crashing its way through stems and underbrush towards the shore. Almost at once the beat of paddles sounded. I ran beyond the steps, down, and saw a prau splashing hastily out to sea. The figure leaning back in the stern looked extremely like Bobby Young. I called, but he never moved or turned, and in a minute the boat was beyond hail.

As I went back up the steps and into the palace I was just in time to see Marina, in a long old-fashioned bathing gown, slip secretly to her room. The gown was hardly wet. I did not see her mother.

Dinner was silent that night, and after, Marina played no more with her flower balls; she sat apart at the far end of the steps and looked out to the rising of the moon. Yet once or twice I saw her, when she may have thought herself unseen, turn to look at me, and absurdly I imagined she was crying.

Mevrouw, with knitting in hand, took up the tale of the pearl.

"I said, mister, that no one in the world but only my man could have found that pearl. It is true, and no one in the world will maybe ever find one again. He had studied much to cure the diver's paralysis, which stops the diver, even him with the dress, at thirty fathoms. Now below thirty, below forty and fifty, there are wonderful things, more wonderful as you go, but it is death to find them, for as you are drawn up again you die. It is the nitrogen that fills your blood and stops

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your heart. My husband found a cure, mister, though nor I nor another knows what. But there was a Malay was very young and strong, and my husband gave it to him, into his veins, and that Malay went down, more and more deep. And on the last time—mister, Frank he said always that it was the fault of the man. He said it was too far to go, and that the Malay was tempted, as divers are."

"Yes," I said, remembering some of Bobby Young's wild tales.

"The truth is, he was pulled up that last time, dead. Never he could tell what he saw. But my husband knew. 'He has found what I always believed,' was what he said. 'I have always known that there are giant pearl oysters, as there are giant clams of the sort that can cut a man in two, and they are only a little lower down. And that is what Ahmet has seen,' he said, 'and he has gone mad, and plunged deep, deep after it, without thinking of what I warned him. And he has died,' so he said, and we took the great pearl that was wrapped in Ahmet's sarong—for what the diver finds belongs to the master—and we put it away. 'That shall be for the child's fortune,' he said. Mister, you have heard the rest; you know how my man ended."

"It was a loss to the world," I said. I may have spoken somewhat absently; my mind was running on the events of the afternoon. Had I really seen Bobby Young? What had he been doing there? In the ten days or more of my stay, how often had he met, in secret, the pale Nordic beauty, the "snowy-breasted pearl," and with what intention in his wild, drink-sodden mind?

Whatever there was to know about it, I had no doubt the mother knew by this time. Maybe that was the cause of her silence.

I went to bed with my mind a madness of huge pearls, gaping gigantic oysters underseas, dead divers and dead men of science, and over all the face of the pale-haired beauty, and the cunning, drink-crazed laugh of Bobby Young.

Next morning, however, I had just one thing to think about, and that was the illness of Mrs. Frank Watts. Marina and myself, with the help of the small Malay servitor, were occupied all day ministering to her. She would not have the military doctor brought over from Ternate.

Toward evening she seemed better, and Marina slipped away for a breath of air. The girl looked paler than ever. She had scarcely spoken to me; when not engaged with her mother, she followed me ceaselessly about with her eyes and seemed always as if she were about to ask me some question. But the question never came forth from her thin, rose-tinted lips, that had taken on a sad droop these last few days.

I hardly missed her, I was so busy attending to Mrs. Watts. I knew now that the woman was getting better. She was not so dangerously ill as she had thought. She waked up and stared about her.

"You're better," I told her.

She did not seem to hear me; she looked as if she were listening for some one, or something, beyond my ken. Suddenly she broke into a terrible cry.

"Save her—save her!" she screamed. "Marina—my pearl! In the bamboos. Run fast—leave me!"

I saw that she would fling herself out of bed if I did not obey her. I left the room, ran out through the back veranda and burst into the clump of bamboo.

I don't know what I expected or whether I expected anything, but this was what I found.

Marina and Bobby Young were standing together beside a stone bench that had been set in the shade of the trees. A stranger stood with them—a fattish, dull looking man in a very long white coat. On his head, instead of a helmet, he wore a wide black felt hat. He had a book and was just closing it. Bobby, as I looked, handed him something that crackled like bank paper.

"I may go?" said the stout man in Dutch, breathing hard. "I am afraid to remain here." He stuffed the notes into his pocket and scuttled down the hill.

I had no difficulty at all in realizing the significance of the little scene, and it affected me just as a lump of stone dropped on my head might have done—struck me almost insensible on my feet.

I stood literally gaping.

Marina did the strangest thing that any new-wed bride can ever have done in the history of marriages. She ran from the parson and the bridegroom, planted herself before me and said fiercely: "So you see other people are married as well as you!"

The parson had disappeared; Bobby Young came towards us both and I saw that he was not quite sober.

"Oh, you child," I cried bitterly, "what have you done?"

"She's married a better man and a smarter man than you," said Bobby, reeling a little. "When I told her you were married and there wasn't an earthly for her, in spite of the sheep's eyes you'd been making, she took me like a bird."

"My wife—" I said, and stopped. What was the use?

Marina had not moved. She still stood in front of me, with her wonderful white-gold hair rising and falling in waves as the sunset wind took it, sweeping up from the lagoon.

"Where is your wife?" she asked.

And I answered her, "I divorced my wife last year."

Young burst out into the whisky-crazy laugh I had heard in my dreams.

"Well, if that isn't the best joke of the season!"

Then he flung an arm round Marina and led her, unresisting, dazed, to the house.

I followed them. I can scarce tell you how I felt. Something had ended, something closed before it was well begun; it was as if bells were ringing to rest an innocent creature that had not lived a day.

I followed them into the great hall. *Mevrouw* had risen, in spite of her weakness. White as a stone, she was sitting in a tarnished old chair of state, her arms clasped tightly about a bundle of blue silks. I think she had been meaning to hide it more safely. There may or may not have been truth in her claims to spirit guidance, but just then she certainly knew what had been happening.

"You have married him!" she said. "Marina, Marina, were you mad?"

"I was," said Marina, shivering a little.

The air was warm; only her own thoughts could have made her tremble. "But—mama," she said, in a kind of wail, "mama! I did not know."

We four looked at each other for a moment in silence.

The mother opened wide her arms and the girl crept in.

It was Young who spoke first. "Well, this is a nice cheerful wedding party, I don't think! Look here, old bean—I'm not so keen on the little cat as all that. Get the old lady to hand over the pearl as big as a walnut and I'll say toodle-oo. Stick me for desertion and restitution and all that as much as you like. Is it a go?"

"Mama! mama!" whispered the child—she was little more. Followed a word or two in Dutch mingled with sobs.

Frank Watts' widow rose to the occasion. She laid aside Marina's clinging arms, undid the silken wrappings of the pearl and, cupping both hands about its glittering heaviness, handed it to Young. I never saw a man more suddenly sobered.

"Is it not big enough for mister?" demanded Emma Watts scornfully.

"That's the trouble," said Young, a keen trading look appearing on the face that had one minute earlier been merely fatuous. "It's too beastly big! A pearl is an ornament, not a blazing curio. One doesn't use pearls to buzz at people's heads and break them with;

there is only one use for a pearl, and that's to hang round a girl's neck. Can you fancy—well, it's absurd. *Mevrouw*, your flaming pearl isn't even worth a beastly hundred pounds."

"Give it to me!" shrieked *Mevrouw* Watts, springing up. "You—you are like the rest. You want my pearl for nothing. You!"

"I wouldn't have it as a beastly gift," said Young, tossing it back to her as one tosses a cricket ball.

Mevrouw was standing unsteadily on her feet; her hands shook with weakness. She missed the pearl. Never since the war have I heard such a cry as that she gave when the pearl, passing her eager hands, flew through the air, struck the marble steps and like a falling orange went bump-bumping down. I flung myself after it; so did Young, but neither of us could catch it up. It bounded fearfully, springing higher and higher on each step. In the westerling sun it shone as nothing else on earth or sea was ever seen to shine before; I felt—and I think Young must have felt too—a sudden stabbing doubt lest our judgment should, after all, have been mistaken. The thing, even if it had no place among gems, was so lovely.

Then in an instant the loveliness, the miracle, was gone. Watts' pearl, bounding higher than ever on the last and widest of the steps, had burst. The two halves turned, sparkling brilliantly at their broken edges, and fell among the floating flowers and bobbing fruits into the deep sea water. Like two stones they sank. And on the landing slab, rolling gently and just coming to rest upon the verge, there was a pearl.

A tiny pearl it seemed.

"Gad, it was one of those M. O. P.'s after all!" shouted Young, using a term that, I remembered, he had explained as meaning a pearl within a pearl—a mother-of-pearl in the true sense.

Suddenly he flung himself after the little rolling sphere.

I saw him stumble as a drunken man stumbles. He reached out, tripped, hit his head with a bone-cracking smash on the marble, and went without a cry into the deep. There was a space of green water for a moment among the floating flowers before they met together again and went, with the oranges, bobbing down the tide.

If he had risen—but I am no diver. He did not rise.

I don't know when we all realized that it was no use standing there staring in the thickening dusk waiting for that to happen which never would. I remember finding myself at the top of the steps again, saying, in a voice that I tried to make commonplace, "It was nobody's fault." And the old woman, her arm round Marina, holding her as if she never would let go, answered me:

"His own fault, mister; let us thank the God who has saved Marina, and the Devil who has taken his own."

"What about the other pearl?" asked Marina suddenly. I opened my hand and showed it. Small? Had I called it small? Now that I saw it away from the huge mother gem in which it had lain concealed—how many hundred years?—I could tell that it was of regal size, a pearl to make a fortune, though it was not so big as a chestnut, or as a hazelnut even.

It was perhaps as big as the top of a thimble, and it was, beyond that, the purest and most lovely pink pearl that ever left the bottom of the sea.

The Queen of Holland has it now. I have the other pearl.

The Royal Society commissioned me to carry on Frank Watts' work, and we are all living on Klabok, in the restored palace, with a little party of assistant men of science, divers, tenders and helpers. I hope the world may hear more of us by and by. The British Museum wants the first coconut pearl—if we ever find another. But I do not think that I shall trouble much about that.

The Yellow Streak

(Continued from page 109)

breakfast he could not look at the porridge and the bacon and eggs which were set before him. Hutchinson too was feeling none too well.

"I fancy we made rather a night of it," said his host, with a smile to conceal his faint embarrassment.

"I feel like the dickens," said Izzard.

"I'm going to breakfast off a whisky and soda," added Hutchinson.

Izzard asked for nothing better and it was with distaste that they watched Campion as he ate with healthy appetite a substantial meal. Campion chafed them.

"Izzard, you're looking green about the gills," he said. "I never saw such a filthy color."

Izzard flushed. His swarthiness was always a sensitive point with him. But he forced himself to give a cheery laugh.

"You see, I had a Spanish grandmother," he answered, "and when I'm under the weather it always comes out. I remember at Harrow I fought a boy and licked him because he called me a blasted half-caste."

"You are dark," said Hutchinson. "Do Malays ever ask you if you have any native blood in you?"

"Yes, confound their impudence!"

A boat with their kit had started early in the morning. Campion and Izzard were to set out immediately after tiffin in order to arrive at the place where they were to spend the night before the bore passed. A bore is a wave that rushes up a tidal river, and Hutchinson had talked to them about it the night before; Campion had never seen one and was interested in it.

"This is one of the best in Borneo. It's worth seeing," said Hutchinson. He told them how the natives, waiting their moment, rode it and were borne up the river on its crest at a breathless and terrifying speed. He had done it once himself. "Never no more for me," he said. "I was scared out of my wits."

"I should like to do it once," said Izzard.

"It's exciting enough, but my word, when you're in a flimsy little dug-out and you know that if the native doesn't get the right moment you'll be flung out in that seething torrent and you won't have a chance in a million—no, it's not my idea of sport."

"I've shot a good many rapids in my day," said Campion.

"You wait till you see the bore. It's one of the most terrifying things I know. I suppose about a dozen natives are drowned in it in this river alone every year."

They lounged about on the veranda most of the morning and Hutchinson showed them the court-house. Then gin *pahits* were served. They drank two or three. Izzard began to feel himself, and when at length tiffin was ready he found that he had an excellent appetite. Hutchinson pressed them to drink.

"You've got nothing to do but sleep. Why shouldn't you get drunk?"

Campion suggested once or twice that they ought to start, but Hutchinson, and Izzard too—for now he was feeling very happy and comfortable—assured him that there was plenty of time.

When at last he walked down with them to the river they were all very merry and none of them was quite steady on his legs. Over the middle of the boat was a rattan awning and under this Hutchinson had had a mattress laid. The crew were prisoners who had been marched down from the jail to row the white men and they wore dingy sarongs with the prison mark. They waited at their oars; the warder in charge of them was at the helm.

Izzard and Campion shook hands with Hutchinson and threw themselves down on the mattress. The boat pushed off. They felt drowsy.

"I'm going to have a wonderful snooze," Izzard said.

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"What about the bore?" asked Campion. "Ca, that's all right! We needn't worry about that."

He gave a long and noisy yawn. His limbs felt as though they were of lead. He had one moment in which he was conscious of his delicious drowsiness and then he knew nothing more.

Suddenly he was awakened by Campion shaking him.

"I say, what's that?" cried Campion.

"What's what?"

He spoke irritably, for sleep was still heavy upon him, but with his eyes he followed Campion's gesture. He could hear nothing, but a good way off he saw two or three white-crested waves following one another. They did not look very alarming.

"Oh, I suppose that's the bore."

"What are we going to do about it?" cried Campion.

Izzard was scarcely yet quite awake. He smiled at the concern in Campion's voice. "Don't worry. These fellows know all about it. They know exactly what to do. We may get a bit splashed."

But while they were saying these few words the bore came nearer, very quickly, with a roar like the roar of an angry sea, and then Izzard saw that the waves were much higher than he had thought. He did not like the look of them and he tightened his belt so that his shorts should not slip down if the boat was upset. In a moment the waves were upon them. It was a great wall of water; it seemed to tower over them; it might have been twelve feet high, but you could measure it only with your horror. It was quite plain that no boat could weather it.

The first wave dashed over them, drenching them all, half filling the boat with water, and then immediately another wave struck them. The boatmen began to shout. They pulled madly at their oars and the steersman yelled an order. But in that surging torrent they were helpless and it was frightening to see how soon they lost all control of the boat.

Another great wave dashed over them and the boat began to sink. Izzard and Campion scrambled out of the covered place in which they had been lying and suddenly the boat gave way under their feet and they found themselves struggling in the water. The water surged and stormed around them. Izzard's first impulse was to swim for the shore, but his boy, Hassan, shouted to him to cling to the boat. For a minute or two they all did this. "Are you all right?" Campion shouted to him.

"Yes, enjoying the bath," said Izzard.

He imagined that the waves would pass by as the bore ascended the river and in a few minutes at the outside they would find themselves in calm water once more. He forgot that they were being carried along on its crest. The waves kept dashing over them. They clung to the gunwale and the base of the structure which supported the rattan awning.

Then a larger wave caught the boat and it turned over, falling upon them so that they lost their hold; there seemed nothing but a slippery bottom to catch hold of and Izzard's hands slithered helplessly on the greasy surface. But the boat continued to turn and he made a desperate grab at the gunwale, only to feel it slip out of his hands as the turn went on; then he clung to the framework of the awning, and still it turned, turned slowly right round, and once more he sought for a hand hold on the bottom.

The boat went round and round with a horrible regularity. Each time it rolled over on them Izzard was pushed under the water, only to come up again as the gunwale and then the framework of the awning gave him something to cling to. The struggle was awful.

Presently he began to get terribly out of breath and he felt his strength leaving him. He knew that he could not hold on much longer. Still they were being carried along amid those seething, pounding waves. The boat went round and round and they scrambled

over it like squirrels in a cage. Izzard swallowed a lot of water. He felt he was very nearly done. Hassan could not help him, but it was a comfort that he was there, for Izzard knew that his boy, used to the water all his life, was a powerful swimmer.

Then, Izzard did not know why, for a minute or two the boat held bottom downwards so that he was able to cling to the gunwale. It was a precious thing to be able to get his breath. At that moment two dug-outs, with Malays in them riding the bore, passed swiftly by them. They shouted for help, but the Malays averted their faces and went on. They saw the white men and did not want to be concerned in any trouble that might befall them. It was agonizing to see them go past, callous and indifferent, in their safety.

But on a sudden the boat rolled round again, round and round slowly, and the miserable, exhausting scramble repeated itself. It took the heart out of you. Izzard's strength was all gone and he did not know now whether he had enough to try to swim for the shore. Suddenly he heard a cry.

"Izzard, Izzard! Help! Help!"

It was Campion's voice. It was a scream of agony. It sent a shock all through Izzard's nerves. Campion, Campion—what did he care about Campion? Fear seized him, a blind animal fear, and it gave him a new strength. He did not answer.

"Help me, quick, quick!" he said to Hassan.

Hassan understood him at once. By a miracle one of the oars was floating quite close to them and he pushed it into Izzard's hands. He placed a hand under Izzard's arm and they struck away from the boat. Izzard's heart was pounding and his breath came with difficulty. He felt horribly weak. The waves beat in his face. The bank looked dreadfully far away. He did not think he could ever reach it.

Suddenly the boy cried that he could touch bottom and Izzard put down his legs, but he could feel nothing; he swam a few more exhausted strokes, his eyes fixed on the bank, and then, trying again, felt his feet sink into thick mud. He was thankful.

He floundered on and there was the bank within reach of his hands, black mud in which he sank to his knees; he scrambled up, and when he came to the top he found a little flat with tall rank grass all about it. He and Hassan sank down on it and lay for a while stretched out like dead men. They were so tired that they could not move. They were covered with mud from head to foot.

But presently Izzard's mind began to work and a pang of anguish on a sudden shook him. Campion was drowned. It was awful. He did not know how he was going to explain the disaster when he got back to Kuchin. They would blame him for it; he ought to have remembered the bore and told the steersman to make for the bank and tie up the boat when he saw it coming. It wasn't his fault, it was the steersman's; he knew the river; why hadn't he had the sense to get into safety? How could he have expected that it was possible to ride that horrible torrent? Izzard's limbs shook as he remembered the wall of seething water that rushed down upon them.

He must get the body and take it back to Kuchin. He wondered whether any of the crew were drowned too. He felt too weak to move, but Hassan now rose and wrung the water out of his sarong; he looked over the river and quickly turned to Izzard.

"Tuan, a boat is coming."

The long grass prevented Izzard from seeing anything.

"Shout to them," he said.

Hassan slipped out of view and made his way along the branch of a tree that overhung the water; he cried out and waved. Presently Izzard heard shouts. There was a rapid conversation between the boy and the occupants of the boat and then the boy came back.

"They saw us capsize, Tuan," he said, "and they came as soon as the bore had passed. There's a long house on the other side. If you

will cross the river they will give us sarongs and food and we can sleep there."

Izzard for a moment felt that he could not again trust himself on the face of that treacherous water.

"What about the other Tuan?" he asked.

"They do not know."

"If he's drowned they must find the body."

"Another boat has gone up the river."

Izzard did not know what to do. He was numb. Hassan put his arm round his shoulder and raised him to his feet. He made his way through the thick grass to the edge of the water and there he saw a dug-out with two Dyaks in it. The river now once more was calm and sluggish.

The Dyaks repeated to him what they had already told the boy. Izzard could not bring himself to speak. He felt that if he said a word he would burst out crying. Hassan helped him to get in and the Dyaks began to pull across the river. He fearfully wanted something to smoke, but his cigarettes and his matches, both in a hip pocket, were soaking.

The passage of the river seemed endless. The night fell and when they reached the opposite bank the first stars were shining. He stepped ashore and one of the Dyaks took him up to the long house. But Hassan seized the paddle he had dropped and with the other pushed off into the river.

Two or three men and some children came down to meet Izzard and he walked to the house amid a babel of conversation. He climbed the ladder and was led with greetings and excited comment to the space where the young men slept. Rattan mats were hurriedly laid to make him a couch and he sank down on them. Some one brought him a jar of *Arak* and he took a long drink. It was rough and fiery, burning his throat, but it warmed his heart.

He slipped off his shirt and trousers and put on a dry sarong which some one lent him. By chance he caught sight of the yellow new moon lying on her back, and it gave him a keen, almost a sensual, pleasure. He could not help thinking that he might at that moment be a corpse floating up the river with the tide. The moon had never looked more lovely.

He began to feel hungry and he asked for rice. One of the women went into a room to prepare it. He was more himself now and he began to think again of the explanations he would make at Kuchin. No one could really blame him because he had gone to sleep; he certainly wasn't drunk—Hutchinson would bear him out there—and how was he to suspect that the steersman would be such a fool? It was just rotten luck. But he couldn't think of Campion without a shudder. At last a platter of rice was brought him and he was just about to start eating when a man ran hurriedly along and came up to him.

"The Tuan's come!" he cried.

"What Tuan?"

He jumped up. There was a commotion about the doorway and he stepped forward. Hassan was coming quickly towards him out of the darkness and then he heard a voice.

"Izzard, Are you there?" Campion advanced towards him. "Well, here we are again! That was a pretty near thing, wasn't it? You seem to have made yourself nice and comfortable. My heavens, I could do with a drink."

His dank clothes clung around him and he was muddy and dishevelled. But he was in excellent spirits.

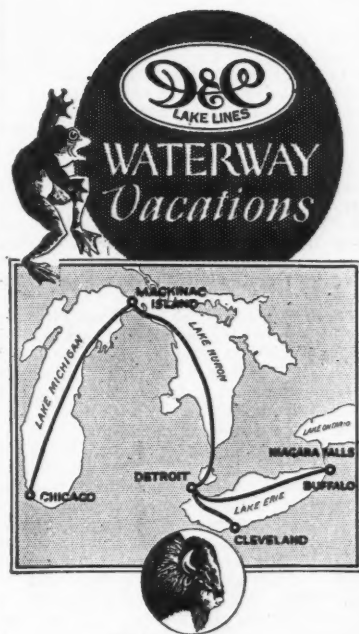
"I didn't know where they were bringing me. I'd made up my mind that I should have to spend the night on the bank. I thought you were drowned."

"Here's some *Arak*," said Izzard.

Campion put his mouth to the jar and drank and spluttered and drank again. "Muck, but it's strong!" He looked at Izzard with a grin of his broken and discolored teeth. "I say, old man, you look as though you'd be all the better for a wash."

"I'll wash later."

"All right, so will I. Tell them to get me a



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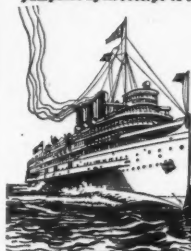
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sarong. How did you get out?" He did not wait for an answer. "I thought I was done for. I owe my life to these two sportsmen here." He indicated with a humorous nod two of the Dyak prisoners whom Izzard vaguely recognized as having been part of their crew. "I couldn't have lasted another minute. I don't know how they managed it, but somehow they got hold of the mattress we'd been lying on, and they made it into a roll. They're sportsmen, they are. I don't know why they didn't just save themselves without bothering about me. They gave it me. I caught hold of the thing and between them somehow or other they dragged me ashore. We must do something for them. Couldn't we get their sentences remitted or something?"

The danger from which he had escaped made Campion excited and voluble; but Izzard hardly listened to what he said. He heard once more, as distinctly as though the words rang now through the air, Campion's agonized cry for help, and he felt sick with terror. The blind panic raced down his nerves.

Campion was talking still, but was he talking to conceal his thoughts? Izzard looked into those bright blue eyes and sought to read the sense behind the flow of words. Was there a hard glint in them or something of cynical mockery? Did he know that Izzard, leaving him to his fate, had cut and run? He flushed deeply. After all, what was there that he could have done? At such a moment it was each for himself and the devil take the hindmost.

But what would they say in Kuchin if Campion told them that Izzard had deserted him? He ought to have stayed; he wished now with all his heart he had; but then, then it was stronger than himself; he couldn't. Could anyone blame him? No one who had seen that fierce and seething torrent. Oh, the water and the exhaustion so that he could have cried!

"If you're as hungry as I am you'd better have a tuck in at this rice," he said.

Campion ate voraciously, but when Izzard had taken a mouthful or two he found that he had no appetite. Campion talked and talked. Izzard listened suspiciously. He felt that he must be alert and he drank more *Arak*. He began to feel a little drunk.

"I shall get into the devil of a row at Kuchin," he said tentatively.

"I don't know why."

"I was told off to look after you. They won't think it was very clever of me to let you get nearly drowned."

"It wasn't your fault. It was the fault of that fool of a steersman. After all, the important thing is that we're saved. By George, I thought I was finished once. I shouted out to you. I don't know if you heard me."

"No, I didn't hear anything. There was such a devil of a row, wasn't there?"

"Perhaps you'd got away before. I don't exactly know when you did."

Izzard looked at him sharply. Was it his fancy that there was an odd look in Campion's eyes?

"There was such an awful confusion," he said. "I was just about down and out. My boy threw me over an oar. He gave me to understand you were all right. He told me you'd got ashore."

The oar! He ought to have given Campion the oar and told Hassan, the strong swimmer, to give him his help. Was it his fancy again that Campion gave him a quick and searching glance?

"I wish I could have been of more use to you," said Izzard.

"Oh, I'm sure you had enough to do to look after yourself!" answered Campion.

The head man brought them cups of *Arak* and they both drank a good deal. Izzard's head began to hum and he suggested that they should turn in. Beds had been prepared for them and mosquito nets fixed. They were to set out at dawn on the rest of their journey down the river. Campion's bed was next to his and in a few minutes he heard him snoring. He had fallen asleep the moment he had lain

down. Izzard's head now was aching horribly and he could not think clearly.

When Hassan roused him as day broke it seemed to him that he had not slept at all. Their clothes had been washed and dried, but they were bedraggled objects as they walked along the narrow pathway to the river where the prau was waiting for them. They rowed leisurely. The morning was lovely and the great stretch of placid water gleamed in the early light.

"By George, it's fine to be alive!" said Campion.

Izzard hated him. He was sure that this morning there was a difference in his manner. He did not know what to do. He had a mind to throw himself on his mercy. He had behaved like a cad, but he was sorry; he would give anything to have the chance again, but anyone might have done what he had, and if Campion gave him away he was ruined. He could never stay in Sarawak; his name would be mud in Borneo and the Straits Settlements.

Izzard thought of what he had said the night before. It wasn't the truth, of course, but who could know that? At all events, who could prove that he hadn't honestly thought that Campion was safe? Whatever Campion said, it was only his word against the other's; he could laugh and shrug his shoulders and say that Campion lost his head and didn't know what he was talking about. Besides, it wasn't certain that Campion hadn't accepted his story; in that frightful struggle for life he could be very sure of nothing. He had a frightful temptation to go back to the subject, but he was afraid if he did that he would excite suspicion in Campion's mind. He must hold his tongue. That was his only chance of safety. And when they got to Kuchin he would get in his story first.

"I should be completely happy now," said Campion, "if I only had something to smoke."

"We shall be able to get some stinkers on board."

Campion gave a little laugh.

"Human beings are very unreasonable," he said. "At the first moment I was so glad to be alive that I thought of nothing else, but now I'm beginning to grouse at the loss of my notes and my photographs and my shaving tackle."

Izzard formulated the thought which had lurked at the back of his mind, but which all through the night he had refused to admit into his consciousness. "I wish that he'd been drowned. Then I'd have been safe."

"There she is!" cried Campion suddenly.

Izzard looked round. They were at the mouth of the river and there was the Rajah Brooke waiting for them. Izzard's heart sank; he had forgotten that she had an English skipper and that he would have to be told the story of their adventure. What would Campion say? The skipper was called Bredon and Izzard had met him often at Kuchin. He was a little bluff man, with a black mustache and a breezy manner.

"Hurry up," he called out to them as they rowed up. "I've been waiting for you since dawn." But when they climbed on board his face fell. "Hulloa, what's the matter with you?"

"Give us a drink and you shall hear all about it," said Campion with his crooked grin.

"Come along."

They sat down under an awning. On a table were a bottle of whisky, soda water and three glasses. The skipper gave an order and in a few minutes they were noisily under way.

"We were caught in the bore," said Izzard. He felt he must say something.

"Were you, by Jove? You're lucky not to have been drowned. What happened?"

Bredon addressed himself to Izzard because he knew him, but it was Campion who answered. He related the whole incident, accurately, and Izzard listened with strained attention. Campion spoke in the plural when he told the early part of the story, and then, when he came to the moment when they were thrown into the water, changed to the singular. At first it was what they had done and now it

was what happened to him. He left Izzard out of it.

Izzard did not know whether to be relieved or alarmed. Why did he not mention him? Was it because in that mortal struggle for life he had thought of nothing but himself, or—did he know?

"And what happened to you?" said Captain Bredon, turning to Izzard.

Izzard was about to answer when Campion spoke.

"Until I got over to the other side of the river I thought he was drowned. I don't know how he got out. I expect he hardly knows himself."

"It was touch and go," said Izzard with a laugh.

Why had Campion said that? He caught his eye. He was sure now that there was a gleam of amusement in it. It was awful not to be certain. He was frightened. He was ashamed. He wondered if he could not so guide the conversation, either now or later, as to ask Campion whether that was the story he was going to tell in Kuchin. There was nothing in it to excite anyone's suspicions. But if nobody else knew, Campion knew. He could have killed him.

"Well, I think you're both of you lucky to be alive," said the skipper.

It was but a short run to Kuchin. Night fell as they docked. Goring, of the police, came on board and shook hands with them. He was living at the rest-house just then and as he set about his work of seeing the native passengers he told them that they would find another man, Porter by name, staying there too. They would all meet at dinner. The boys took charge of their kit and Campion and Izzard strolled along. They bathed and changed and at half past eight the four of them assembled in the common room for gin *pahitis*.

"I say, what's this Bredon tells me about your being nearly drowned?" said Goring as he came in.

Izzard felt himself flush, but before he could answer Campion broke in, and Izzard was certain that Campion spoke in order to give the story as he chose. He felt hot with shame. Not a word was spoken in disparagement of him; not a word was said of him at all; he wondered if those two men who listened, Goring and Porter, thought it strange that he should be left out. He looked at Campion intently as he proceeded with his narrative; he told it rather humorously, so that the two listeners laughed at the quandary in which they found themselves.

"A thing that's tickled me since," said Campion, "is that when I got over to the other bank I was black with mud from head to foot. I felt I really ought to jump in the river and have a wash, but you know I felt I'd been in that river as much as ever I wanted and I said to myself, no, by George, I'll go dirty. And when I got into the long house and saw Izzard as black as I was I knew he'd felt just like I did."

Izzard noticed that Campion had told the story in precisely the same words as he had used when he told it to the skipper of the Rajah Brooke. There could be only one explanation of that; he knew, he knew everything and had made up his mind exactly what story to tell. The ingenuity with which Campion gave the facts and yet left out what must be to Izzard's discredit was devilish. But why was he holding his hand? It wasn't in him not to feel contempt and resentment for the man, who had callously deserted him in that moment of dreadful peril.

Suddenly in a flash of inspiration Izzard understood—Campion was keeping the truth to tell to Willis the Resident. Izzard had goose-flesh as he thought of confronting Willis. He could deny, but would his denials serve him? Willis was no fool and he would get at Hassan; Hassan could not be trusted to be silent; Hassan would give him away. Then he would be done for. Willis would suggest that he had better go home.

He had a racking headache and after dinner

he went to his room. He wanted to be alone so that he could devise a plan of action. And suddenly a thought came to him which made him go hot and cold. He knew that the secret which he had guarded so long was a secret to nobody. For of course this story of his about a Spanish grandmother was nothing but a lie; his mother, the fat woman with gray hair who sat about all day smoking cigarets in an overheated room, was the daughter of a Scotch doctor and his native mistress. That was the reason for Izzard's dark eyes and swarthy skin; that was why he spoke Malay so well and learned Dyak so easily; and that was why he was gay and friendly.

But they wouldn't say he was gay and friendly then; they would say he was deuced familiar; and they would say he was inefficient and careless, just like a half-caste, and when he talked about marrying a white woman they would call it cheek.

Oh, it was so unfair! After all it was only a quarter; three parts of him were as English as possible, English and Scotch; and what difference could it make? But they would be always on the watch for the failure at the critical moment which they always expected. Everyone knew that you couldn't rely on men who had that mixture of blood in them; sooner or later they would let you down.

He asked himself whether it was on account of that wretched quarter of native blood that when he heard Campion cry out his nerve had failed him. After all, anyone might at that moment have been seized with panic. But of course in Kuchin they would say it was only what they had expected. They had known all along; he was certain of it now; and behind his back they had called him a half-caste.

He felt like a hunted animal.

He could think of nothing and he went to bed. He tossed about restlessly. Now and then he fell asleep, but he was awakened by horrible dreams. He was awake definitely before dawn. His only chance was to see Willis and tell him his story first. He thought over carefully what he was going to say and chose the very words he meant to use.

He got up early and went out. In order not to see Campion he went without breakfast. He walked along the one highroad in Kuchin till such time as he knew the Resident would be in his office and then walked back again. He sent in his name and was ushered into Willis's room. Willis was a little elderly man with thin gray hair and a long yellow face.

"I'm glad to see you back safe and sound," he said, shaking hands with Izzard. "What's this I hear about your being nearly drowned?" Izzard, in clean ducks, his topi spotless, was a fine figure of a man. His black curly hair was neatly brushed and his mustache was trimmed. He had an upright and soldierly bearing.

"I thought I'd better come and tell you at once, sir, as you told me to look after Campion."

"Fire away."

Izzard told his story. He made light of the danger. He gave Willis to understand that it had not been very great. They would never have been upset if they had not started so late.

"I tried to get Campion away earlier, but he'd had two or three drinks and the fact is he didn't want to move."

"Was he tight?"

"I don't know about that," smiled Izzard good-humoredly. "I shouldn't say he was cold sober."

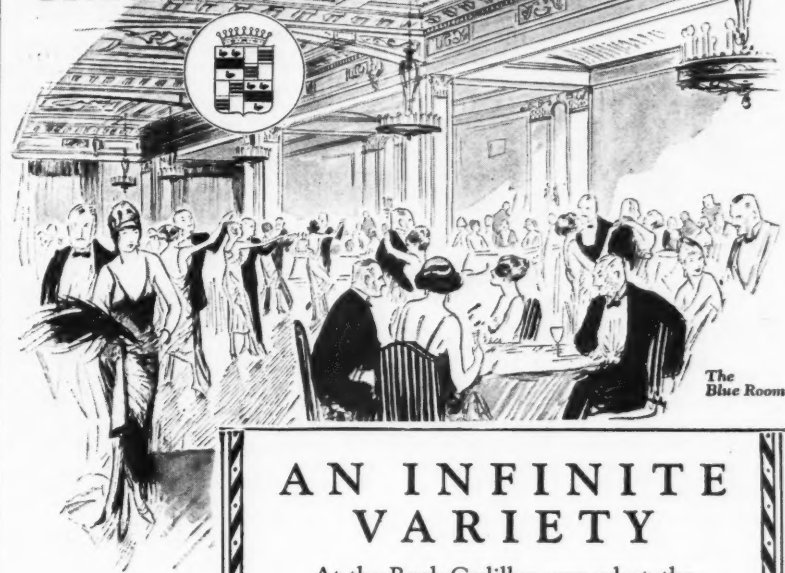
He went on with his story. He managed to insinuate that Campion had lost his head a little. Of course it was a very frightening business to a man who wasn't a decent swimmer. He, Izzard, had been more scared for Campion than for himself; he knew the only chance was to keep cool, and the moment they were upset he saw that Campion had got the wind up.

"You can't blame him for that," said the Resident.

"Of course I did everything I possibly could

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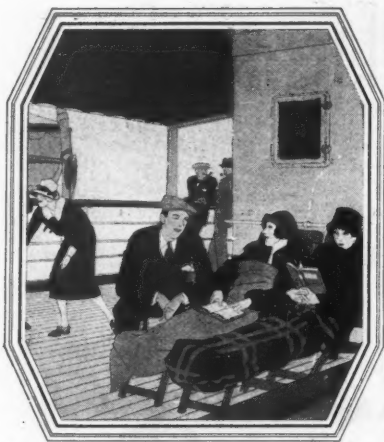
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for him, sir, but the fact is, there wasn't anything much I could do."

"Well, the great thing is that you both escaped. It would have been very awkward for all of us if he'd been drowned."

"I thought I'd better come and tell you the facts before you saw Campion, sir. I fancy he's inclined to talk rather wildly about it. There's no use exaggerating."

"On the whole your stories agree pretty well," said Willis, with a little smile. Izzard looked at him blankly. "Haven't you seen Campion this morning? I heard from Goring that there'd been some trouble and I looked in last night on my way home from the Fort after dinner. You'd already gone to bed."

Izzard made a great effort to preserve his composure.

"By the way, you got away first, didn't you?"

"I don't really know, sir. You see there was a lot of confusion."

"You must have if you got over to the other side before he did."

"I suppose I did, then."

"Well, thanks for coming to tell me," said Willis, rising from his chair.

As he did so he knocked some books on the floor. They fell with a sudden thud. The unexpected sound made Izzard start violently and he gave a gasp. The Resident looked at him quickly.

"I say, your nerves are in a pretty state."

Izzard could not control his trembling. "I'm very sorry, sir," he murmured.

"I expect it's been a shock. You'd better take it easy for a few days. Why don't you get the doctor to give you something?"

"I didn't sleep very well last night."

The Resident nodded as though he understood. Izzard left the room and as he passed out some man he knew stopped him and congratulated him on his escape. They all knew of it.

He walked back to the rest-house. And as he walked he repeated to himself the story he had told the Resident. Was it really the same story that Campion had told? What a fool he had been to go to bed! He should never have let Campion out of his sight. Why had the Resident listened without telling him that he already knew?

Now Izzard cursed himself for having suggested that Campion was drunk and had lost his head. He had said this in order to discredit him. He knew now that it was a stupid thing to do. And why had Willis said that about his having got away first? Perhaps he was holding his hand too; perhaps he was going to make inquiries; Willis was very shrewd. But what exactly had Campion said? He must know that; at whatever cost he must know. Izzard's mind was seething so that he felt he could hardly keep a hold on his thoughts, but he must keep calm.

He entered the rest-house and there, sitting on a long chair with his legs stretched out, was Campion. He was reading the papers which had arrived during their absence in the jungle. Izzard felt a blind rush of hatred well up in him as he looked at the shabby little bald man who held him in the hollow of his hand.

"Hulloa," said Campion, looking up. "Where have you been?"

To Izzard it seemed that there was in his eyes a mocking irony. He clenched his hands and his breath came fast. "What have you been saying to Willis about me?" he asked abruptly.

The tone in which he put the unexpected question was so harsh that Campion gave him a look of faint surprise.

"I don't think I've been saying anything very much about you. Why?"

"He came here last night." Izzard's brows were drawn together in an angry frown as he tried to read Campion's thoughts.

"I told him you'd gone to bed with a headache. He wanted to know about our mishap."

"I've just seen him."

Izzard walked up and down the large and darkened room; now, though it was still early,

the sun was hot and dazzling. He felt himself in a net. He was furiously angry; he could have seized Campion by the throat and strangled him, and yet because he did not know what he had to fight against he felt himself powerless. He was tired and ill and his nerves were badly shaken.

On a sudden the anger which had given him a sort of strength left him and he was filled with despondency. It was as though water and not blood ran through his veins; his heart sank and his knees seemed to give way. He felt that if he did not take care he would begin to cry. He felt dreadfully sorry for himself.

"Confound you, I wish I'd never set eyes on you!" he cried pitifully.

"What on earth's the matter?" asked Campion with astonishment.

"Oh, don't pretend! We've been pretending for two days and I'm fed up with it." His voice rose shrilly; it sounded odd in that robust and powerful man. "I'm fed up with it. I cut and run. I left you to drown. I know I behaved like a skunk. I couldn't help it."

Campion rose slowly from his chair. "What are you talking about?"

His tone was so genuinely surprised that it gave Izzard a start. A cold shiver ran down his spine.

"When you called for help I was panic-stricken. I just caught hold of an ear and got Hassan to help me get away."

"That was the most sensible thing you could do."

"I couldn't help you. There wasn't a thing I could do."

"Of course not. It was silly of me to shout. It was waste of breath and breath was the very thing I wanted."

"Do you mean to say you didn't know?"

"When those fellows got me the mattress I thought you were still clinging to the boat. I had an idea that I got away before you did."

Izzard put both his hands to his head and he gave a hoarse cry of despair. "What a fool I've been!"

The two men stood for a while staring at one another. The silence seemed endless.

"What are you going to do now?" asked Izzard at last.

"Oh, my dear fellow, don't worry. I've been frightened too often myself to blame anyone who shows the white feather. I'm not going to tell anyone."

"Yes, but you know."

"I promise you, you can trust me. Besides, my job's done here and I'm going home. I want to catch the next boat to Singapore." There was a pause and Campion looked for a while reflectively at Izzard. "There's only one thing I'd like to ask you. I've made a good many friends here, and there are one or two things I'm a little sensitive about; when you tell the story of our upset I should be grateful if you wouldn't make out that I had behaved badly. I shouldn't like the fellows here to think that I'd lost my nerve."

Izzard flushed darkly. He remembered what he had said to the Resident. It almost looked as though Campion had been listening over his shoulder.

He cleared his throat.

"I don't know why you think I should do that."

Campion's shining eyes were smiling, but behind the smile was a startling coldness. Izzard, dimly conscious of his own weakness, shrank at the stony hardness he saw for the first time in the shabby little man. Campion faintly shrugged his shoulders.

"The yellow streak," he replied. "Have a cheroot."

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Since an episode in this story is founded on a personal experience of the author's, he wishes to state that the characters he has described do not refer to either of his companions on that unlucky occasion.

The Snake Charmer (Continued from page 57)

cobra almost as big as the first one, and a few minutes later in a garden on the outskirts of the village of Luxor. In the latter place he found and called to him a five-foot grass snake, which I suspect was a harmless one, vicious-looking as it appeared.

Later I learned that on the next morning Moussa had made an equally successful demonstration of his remarkable powers for Prince Leopold of Prussia, who also was at the Winter Palace Hotel at the time. The places selected by the Prince were in a different section from those to which we had taken Moussa.

This, then, is the record of the most mystifying spectacle I ever have seen, reported as accurately as it is possible for me to do. So far as I personally am concerned, I am convinced. I know that you can take Moussa Mohammed to any spot you wish to select, and if there are snakes there he will find them. I know that he can make snakes come to him, for I have seen him do it.

I also learned that in the village of Luxor, where for many years he has been performing his feats with snakes and scorpions, the residents, both native and European, have a devout belief in his abilities. Each spring the manager of the Winter Palace Hotel, a hard-headed Swiss businessman, sends for Moussa to rid the hotel gardens of snakes. The people of the village whenever their mud huts become too thickly infested with scorpions for comfort call on Moussa to come and take them away.

I talked about Moussa, too, with Doctor Robert Mond, who for twenty-two years has been excavating tombs at Luxor. Doctor Mond is a wealthy British chemist, with his brother, Sir Alfred Mond, controlling the Solvay process, from which they have made a fortune. Besides being an authority on Egyptian history and hieroglyphics, Doctor Mond has a high reputation as a scientist.

"There is no doubt," said Doctor Mond to me, "that Moussa really does have some peculiar power over snakes. From the earliest times the Egyptians seem to have known and revered the cobra. It is not at all unlikely that for many centuries certain Egyptians have been accustomed to handling snakes and probably the knowledge acquired about snakes has been handed down from father to son. I personally never have seen Moussa perform, but I am inclined to the belief that his feats are accomplished through a sort of hypnotism. Snakes are easily hypnotized and can be

influenced or controlled in three ways—by motion, such as the movement of a juggler's wand, by music, as from the pipes that most snake-charmers use, or by the human voice used in a monotonous chant. I suspect that Moussa's chanting hypnotizes the cobras, but not having seen his performance, I cannot offer any definite theory."

And here is something else that bears on the subject. In Cairo we were at luncheon with Mary Roberts Rinehart and her husband at the Hotel Semiramis and I was telling her about Moussa's miraculous performance. One of the luncheon guests was Gerald Delaney, a journalist who has resided in Cairo for eighteen years. As I described our experiences with Moussa he nodded his head in affirmation.

"I have seen Moussa find snakes many times," he said, "and it is all true. At one time I got so interested in him that I went about with him until I had learned that chant that he sings. One day I was walking in the park here in Cairo with a young lady. I was telling her about Moussa and began singing the chant. All at once a snake appeared at the edge of the path and began creeping toward me. I never have sung the chant since."

And this completes the record of the most mystifying spectacle I ever have witnessed.

Maybe some of the readers of this article can suggest a rational explanation of what I saw. I cannot. Perhaps some naturalist who has made a special study of the habits of reptiles can tell how Moussa is able to control snakes by the power of his voice. It is even possible that the psychologists who have been delving into the mysteries of the brain's operation will have some plausible explanation to offer.

To me the spectacle of a crawling cobra, the natural foe of man since history began, facing about and crawling in subjection to Moussa, is a fascinating, inexplicable mystery, equalled only by the uncanny facility with which he located the snakes.

I only wish that I had remained long enough in Luxor to have learned the chant that Moussa sings. I would like to have gone up to the Bronx Zoological Garden in New York and sung it at the snake cage there. I would like to know if it works with American snakes. But if at any time I try it I want to be sure there is plenty of good strong wire netting between me and the snake.

My ancestors haven't handed down to me the charm of Solomon that Moussa boasts of. I'm frankly afraid of snakes.

My 3 Husbands (Continued from page 39)

forward?—toward marriage. If the quality of companionship goes out of life, if the spirit of reverence and sympathy is lost, I think we shall be in a very bad way.

I do not see why romance need pass out as marriage comes in. That is the argument, I believe, among women afflicted with the anti-marriage complex. I think the apartment in which one has lived with the man one loves best is the most romantic spot in the world. And the longer you live with him the more the memories and the sweeter the romance.

There are times when my husband does not make as much money as I do. According to some ultra-moderns this should create in me a gorgeous complex against matrimony. It doesn't. I have never been able to see why a woman's earning capacity should be in any way related to her husband's.

My third marriage has never given me one dull moment. My husband does not bore me; neither does he restrict my conduct in any way. He even likes the friends I had before I married him.

He comes from a family whose understanding of music is nil. Consequently, when I go

to the opera I ask some one to join me who really cares for music. He is a bridge fan and I was born quite devoid of card sense. What of it? Week-ends in our home have resolved themselves into a series of bridge tournaments during which I get caught up on all the things I haven't previously had time to read.

My husband and I both have our peculiarities but we do not dwell on them disparagingly. We are too busy for that and we love one another too much.

My daughter believes that my husband is her father and called him "daddy" from the beginning. Anyone who, later on, tells her "the truth" will have us both to reckon with. I believe that every child needs a father quite as much as a mother. The woman who deceives herself into believing that she can enact both rôles will have something to account for eventually.

And I am convinced that the old "bear and forbear" advice is the worst thing which can be said to "newlyweds." If people are truly mated there isn't anything to forbear. If not, why make martyrs of themselves and of one another?



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The Magic of Print

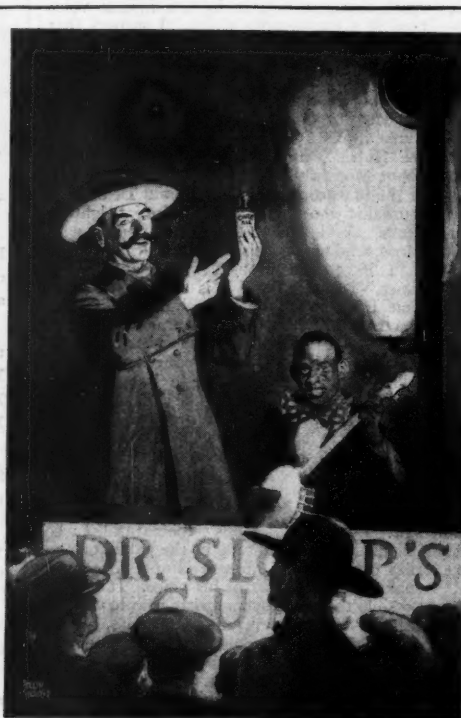
THE old patent-medicine fakir knew well the magic of print. And the army of quacks who followed him have made use of the same magic. Most men and women accept without question printed statements which they might discredit were the same words spoken.

Never before in the known history of the world has there been such an orgy of fake "cures" as there is today. You will find quacks trailing along in the wake of every announcement of important medical research, with false claims of their "discoveries", their fake mechanical appliances and special treatments, their "health institutes" and their offers of free diagnosis and treatment by mail.

Millions for Fake "Cures"

Fake-medicine labels are more cautious than they used to be. The U. S. Government, through the Federal Food and Drugs Act, forbids false or misleading statements on the trade package. But this Act does not prohibit lying statements in advertisements, circulars, or window displays.

The vultures who prey on the sick advertise different remedies each guaranteed to cure a specific disease—tuberculosis, cancer, diabetes, kidney trouble, blood diseases, skin eruptions, epilepsy and almost every other serious ailment. And the dollars—millions of them every year—roll in to enrich these ghoulish quacks whose profits are tolled



"Read the Label!"

"DON'T take my word for it that this medicine will cure you! Don't take anybody's word! Read the label and see for yourself," the street corner patent-medicine fakir urged as he held up a bottle containing some colored liquid guaranteed to cure a long list of ailments and diseases. His confederate in the crowd asked to see a bottle—and then the sales began.

from human lives. Sick folk are pitifully easy victims. They experiment and hope—tragically—until it is too late. Waiting even a few weeks to try out a new patent medicine or a course of treatments at some dubious "health institute", may mean death which might have been prevented by the right medical care.

Cancer and Consumption "Cures"

Of late there has been a renewed wave of advertising of specific cancer and tuberculosis "cures"—the most despicable and cruel of all frauds perpetrated upon sick people. No medicine has ever been found that can be depended upon to cure these diseases—despite seemingly substantiated claims of manufacturers. Testimonials count for little. Many quacks are still using testimonials signed by people who died years ago from the very diseases of which they claimed they had been cured.

When a cure for tuberculosis or cancer is found it will not be necessary for the discoverer to advertise. Magazines and newspapers everywhere will shout the glorious news of his discovery. Instead of being crowded away in a few inches of advertising space, the story will blaze in front-page headlines!

Do not be deceived by the magic of print. Avoid advertised "cures". If you are sick see your doctor.

Although no specific remedy for the cure of tuberculosis has been found at the time this is written and scientists are working constantly on the problem—there are literally hundreds of nostrums offered to the public as guaranteed cures.

Against this cruel exploitation of the sick, the Metropolitan Life Insurance

Company invites the cooperation of editors and publishers everywhere.

It is true that the tuberculosis death rate has been reduced about 50% during the past 10 years and each year shows an improvement. This great battle is being won by a campaign of education through which people are being taught that although tuberculosis cannot be cured by medicine it can be

prevented and even checked in its early stages and perhaps be permanently arrested—by fresh air, sunshine, rest and the right kind of nourishing food.

Booklets giving recent and authoritative information concerning Tuberculosis and Cancer will be mailed free upon request.

HALEY FISKE, President.



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